The Gospel of the Kingdom.

BY
HENRY BAILEY, D.D.



Mathews, July, 1910. Gordon S. Postlethwaite.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

MISSION SERMONS

PREACHED IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

BY

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

IT may be desirable to prefix to the Sermons in this volume a few words of explanation, how they came to be preached, and under what conditions.

A sum had been placed in the hands of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, to form a small endowment of a new Canonry in that Cathedral, with suggestion that it should be the duty of the holder of it to preach an annual sermon in the Cathedral on a subject connected with Foreign Missions. The offer was met with cordial approval by his Grace the Archbishop (Benson), and with like acceptance by the Dean and Chapter. The Canonry was agreed to be called "The Canonry of St. Augustine," in conformity with the wish of the donor, and the holder, no longer now an Honorary Canon, to be called "Canon of St. Augustine in Canterbury Cathedral."

The first sermon on this Foundation was preached A.D. 1890.

In a subsequent year, a further donation in augmentation of the endowment was made, and accepted by the Dean and Chapter, the condition being that another annual sermon on Foreign Missions should be preached in the Cathedral by the holder of the St. Augustine Canonry, at the second Evensong, on the First Sunday after the Epiphany.

BENEDICAT NOS DEUS:
ET METUANT EUM OMNES FINES TERRÆ.

MISSION SERMONS

I

THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral, June 22, 1890.

"My heart is inditing [marg.: boileth, or bubbleth up] a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King."—PSALM xlv. 1.

WHATEVER conjectures may have been raised—and they can be no more than conjectures—about the writer or the occasion of this magnificent Psalm, and whatever theories may be held on different degrees or extent of inspiration, there can be no doubt in the heart of any believer in the Bible that the concurrent mind of the Church of all ages, whether Jewish or Christian, is also the mind of the Holy Ghost, "who spake by the Prophets." We accordingly accept and interpret this Psalm as entirely and objectively Messianic. Its inspiration is of the very highest order. Its thoughts and language are unusually elevated, as compared with even the highest flights of lyrical poetry to be found in other Psalms. The composition starts with a word to be found nowhere else in the whole compass of the Bible, and with a figure expressive of rapturous, bursting joy. "My heart," says the Psalmist, "overfloweth with a goodly matter: I

speak the things which I have made touching the King." The goodly matter urgently presses for the relief of my pent-up feelings ; the King, the Person—such is the ascending parallelism of the verse—the King renders restraint of my feelings utterly impossible. If of Him I speak, it must be as a boiling, bubbling stream.

And so, as we cast our eyes down the course of that stream, what are the things which the Psalmist did make touching the King ? They are the unparalleled excellences of His character, His dignity, His strength, His sweetness, His beauty, His victories, His eternal reign of righteousness, His hatred of iniquity, and then (for this is "a song of *loves*") His approaching marriage, the joyousness and exquisite fragrance of His Person and surroundings, the beauty and attractions (all derived from Himself, and centring in Him) of His chosen Bride, the glory of her train, the rich wedding presents from afar, the blissful consummation, the posterity overspreading all lands and raised to the highest posts of honour, to be occupied to all future ages, with unanimous applause.

Now let me ask any person, whether these high themes, and these expressions of them, would not be rightly regarded as utterly strained and extravagant, except on one supposition, one principle of interpretation—that the King is none other than Messiah Himself, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. But on that supposition we may fill every word, every sentence, to its utmost extent of possible force ; nay, that thus only can the respective addresses to the Bridegroom and the Bride—to Him, " Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ;" to her, " He is thy Lord God, and worship thou Him "—receive any appropriate signification at all.

Thus this magnificent Psalm—this lyrical poem —takes its proper place, in our rational interpretation, as well as in our warmest affections, as a missionary pæan of our Divine King and Head, Jesus Christ. And you will rightly see, from the brief summary just now given of its contents, for how many annual sermons the fresh streams might be successively drawn from the fountain unsealed for us by the inspired Psalmist.

But it would not correspond with my purpose or my plan to linger longer at the present time upon this particular Psalm, tempting as it would be to do so. This is an introductory sermon, or rather an introduction to future sermons, and as there can be but one introduction, I am about to make it distinct from all that may follow, in employing it (and asking your attention accordingly), not on any one subject connected with Missions in full treatment, but on a list or series of such subjects, simply, and it may be drily, indicated to-day as in a table of contents. Or, rather, I would at this time sow the seeds of them in your hearts, that by God's blessing they may begin to take root there at once, and year after year be nurtured, unfolded, fructified to His praise and glory. Receive then to-day and cherish, each one of you, my brethren, the germs of belief and of practice in regard to Church Missions to foreign parts, that they may at once be lodged in your breasts, incorporated into your character, and yield fruit after their kind. What then shall we have, amongst other things, to bring before you?—where by "we" I mean the preacher for the time being, and by "you" I mean the congregation that at the time shall be assembled here. How shall we order our discourse?

Above and before all, surely, we must speak of the

things which inspired writers have made touching the King, Jesus Christ, whether in the Psalms, the Prophets, or in the New Testament, whether in the words of the King Himself, or in those of His chosen Apostles. And, corresponding to the King, we shall speak of His kingdom, the Church, its foundation, its laws, its rise, its extension, its fortunes throughout the centuries, its ultimate establishment in all lands—for it is one of the glad employments of His saints to "show the glory of His kingdom, and talk of His power, that His power, His glory, and mightiness of His kingdom may be known unto men."

We shall dwell on the work of God the Holy Spirit in the Church from the day of Pentecost until now, and on the continuance of His dispensation until His pouring-out upon all flesh. We shall trace the wonderful course of Divine Providence, ordering all things, and the accidents of them, from the small beginning in the upper room in Jerusalem, and thenceforward towards the gradual fulfilment of the Divine purposes. To our unspeakable advantage, the first stages of that supernatural story are preserved for us in the pages of inspiration, where we may study, as we shall describe them to you, the Apostolic missions, and Apostolic methods, supplying principles of action for all future ages.

At another time we shall discontinue our thought of the *corporate* life of the Church, and fix it on what will bring the subject of Missions home to the hearts, the gratitude, the desire of each one among you, of every rank, of every age. Jesus Christ is "the Saviour of all men." Salvation is a word that calls to mind the universal disease, and the sole universal remedy provided in God's mercy

for mankind. The questions will then be—nay, they are questions you may not put off till another year, or even till another day :—Are you sensible of the disease, of its malignity, of its fatal consequences? Have you applied in person to the one Physician who has the sole remedy in His own hands? Have you experienced its saving virtue? Are you filled with a burning desire to communicate the knowledge of the same saving cure, as widely as the disease is spread, amongst others of your race? It is not a vain thing for you : it is your life. Nay more, we shall have to prescribe to you, that it is essential to your own spiritual health and growth, that you minister to other minds diseased, through the medium of the mission of the Gospel to them.

Thus you see that, whether as children of the kingdom, or as having souls of your own to save alive, you are under obligation to take your active part in promoting the Missionary cause.

But there are special additional obligations resting upon you as subjects of the British empire, which in their turn we shall have to explain to you. The rise, progress, extension of the empire, on which the sun never sets, and its continuous growth year by year, are amongst the most wonderful chapters in the history of the world, and are to us the most distinct voice of Divine Providence, bidding us make the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion co-extensive with the empire itself. The proof of this duty will call for very full treatment and illustration from the records of our national history, and description of the nations and tribes which have one after another been brought under the influence, and received into the empire of Great Britain. I would to-day only

ask you to lay to heart that hitherto the Christian duty of this our favoured nation, to evangelize our colonies and foreign dependencies, has been only to a miserably small extent fulfilled, and that it is high time for every one to take his share of the responsibility. Will you, my brethren, find out what your own share is, and take it with right good heart?

Possibly, however, so overwhelmingly vast is the task laid upon us, the sense of obligation will, with many, be more vividly appreciated, and more quickly kindled into action, if we select some one part of the Mission field for pressing its claims upon you, fixing your thoughts, informing your minds, warming your hearts, by the story of special, or newly inaugurated, Missions—*e.g.* those in Western Africa, in Eastern Africa, in Southern Africa, in Central Africa, in India—that wonderful aggregation of nations—in Guiana, in Melanesia, in Madagascar, in China, in Japan; or, again, we shall select for your thankful study, to the increase of your work of faith and labour of love in the support of Missions, some distinguished pioneer of Missionary work in modern, perhaps also in ancient times, portraying in his career what the grace of God can do, and has done, in the rescuing of the lost sheep that were scattered abroad, and bringing them into the fold of Christ, and supplying at the same time convincing evidence of the power of the Gospel in the conversion of men of every tribe and nation and mental capacity. One thing, however, I would observe here, that in presenting the history of any special Mission, or any individual Missionary, we shall do it sympathetically, not critically, still less by way of instituting comparison of methods and societies, or churches, but solely to

illustrate and magnify the work of God done by their means.

But there are other topics which will, in their turn, imperatively call for our candid consideration. "We speak as to wise men." The work of Foreign Missionaries, springing as it does from the direct command of Jesus Christ, sustained as it is upon the explicit promises of God, continued as it has been from the first separation of Saul and Barnabas at Antioch to the present day under the guidance of the Holy Ghost—this work, I say, is, and ever has been, nevertheless conditioned, retarded, opposed, misrepresented; and you must be well instructed herein, that your own faith fail not, that you may hold your hope steadfast unto the end, that you may be able to convince the gainsayers. The lessons of past history will be most valuable on these heads. By the gradual conversion of England or of Europe from heathenism to Christianity we shall teach you to read with patience the annals of modern Missions, in their mingled reports of long waiting, slow progress, unexpected difficulties, imperfect conversions, recurring scandals, and sad relapses. From the inspired Book of the Acts of the Apostles, which, as you know, are the first records of Missionary history, you will learn to expect the opposition of the enemies of the Gospel, the misrepresentation of it by the indifferent, and the discredit brought upon it by the inconsistent—nay, alas! the licentious, drunken, foul-mouthed professors of Christianity. We shall hope thus out of evil to bring good, and to arm you against the objections brought forward by ignorant or prejudiced persons against Missions in general.

This will be a necessary part of the preacher's

office, from time to time; but it yields in real importance to that which will claim our constant endeavour—to lead you to take a right estimate of the real character of Missions, to show you that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, that the work, in short, is a spiritual work, to be taken in hand by spiritual men, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, employing spiritual means, aiming at spiritual ends. We shall have, therefore, to impress on you, my brethren, the duty, and to ask from you the benefit, of regular, earnest prayer to Almighty God for the workers, and for the work: for the workers, that they may be endowed with all the gifts and graces needful for their high calling, that our Missionary Studentship Associations, formed for searching out fit men, may be more worthily supported, so that the number of Missionaries may be largely increased; prayer, too, for the work, that it may prosper in their hands. A sermon on the power of prayer in regard to the Missions of the Church ought to be one of the most moving and successful appeals to your Christian sympathies, and to lift up into an atmosphere higher than any ordinary calculations the aspect of the whole subject.

But there is an atmosphere higher still, into which some preacher, himself borne upwards by the Spirit of God, will one day, I trust, take you with him, as he draws back the curtain for awhile and displays to your believing and enraptured view the unfolding stages of the Divine purposes, the gradual but sure fulfilment of the Divine promises, and the apocalypse of "the things made touching the King;" the "sealing of the hundred and forty and four thousand of the tribes of the children of

Israel ; and after this, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb." What joy can be comparable in its intensity, or in its eternal issues, to the joy of having contributed, in ever so small a degree, by prayers, by labour, by alms, to the number of that glorious and glorified assembly ! May you and I, my dear brethren, after we have rested from our earthly labours, stand in our lot, like the beloved Daniel, at the end of the days !

II

THE EVANGELICAL COMMISSION

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, April 12, 1891 (*Second Sunday after Easter*).

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."—ST. MATTHEW xxviii. 18–20.

LAST year I explained briefly from this place how it had come to pass that an annual sermon on the Foreign Missions of the Church would be preached from that time in this cathedral. I have since learnt, with much thankfulness, that an annual sermon is arranged to be delivered in Truro Cathedral, in pious memory of the great saint, Henry Martyn, a native of that city, and in furtherance of the cause of Missions to the heathen, for which he lived, laboured, suffered, and died.

In the introductory sermon of last year, I took the words of one of the greatest prophets of the old dispensation, as he spoke of the things which he had made touching the King; the words which I have taken to-day are those of the King Himself. "Hear ye Him." I give you the most exact rendering of them which our English tongue admits of

according to the Revised Version, in which you will note, by comparison with our Authorised Version, several words and expressions which will call for our especial attention by and by.

"And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"—"all the days, even unto the consummation of the age:"—for such is the literal translation of the clause.

In order to a due appreciation of this royal commission, it is desirable, and even necessary, to inquire into the time, the place, and the circumstances of its delivery.

The great forty days which intervened between the resurrection and the ascension of our Lord are a period of surpassing interest, riveting our attention and enchaining our affections in a way quite different from that which is called up by His earlier life. His words, strikingly unlike to what He had said before, as indeed the circumstances were of the Divine Speaker, were spoken as it were more immediately from heaven; and He seems to have delayed His ascension in order to speak them.[1] In the brief summary given by St. Luke (Acts i. 3) He is shown to have had two main objects in view: (1) To supply infallible proofs of His resurrection; (2) to speak to His disciples the things concerning the kingdom or Church of God.

Our inquiring interest is still further stimulated

[1] See Bishop Moberly's *Discourses on the Great Forty Days*.

by the very circumstances and manner in which the inspired records are come down to us. We learn the history, not by one continuous and complete narrative, which might be substantially the same in each of the four Evangelists, but by fragmentary accounts contributed by each, which at first sight suggest difficulties and even contradictions, but on closer examination exhibit a general harmony, and assure to us that had it pleased the Holy Ghost to supply more particulars to the Church, we should find in them a full solution of our difficulties.

We fasten, then, with eager inquiry, upon the several appearances which our risen Lord vouchsafed to make. Each of them has its own special lessons of encouragement and instruction. In a sermon on Missions, those of them claim our particular attention which concern the foundation, the constitution, and extension of the Church of the new dispensation. And among this class there is one of pre-eminent and peculiar value to us, as to every member of the Church, of which I have now to treat. It was the one—the only one—which the Lord Himself foretold, and explicitly foretold, and that at the time when the hour of deepest darkness was rapidly drawing near. He was speaking to His chosen ones as their Good Shepherd (and this second Sunday after Easter, I may remark, has been often called the Sunday of the Good Shepherd), and after quoting the prophecy concerning Himself, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," He added emphatically, "After I am raised up, I will go before you (as a shepherd goeth before his sheep) into Galilee." Assuredly His disciples understood none of these things at the time. But His words were taken up by the angel, doubtless by His command, even before His first appearance after

His resurrection. "Go quickly," said he to the women, "and tell His disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him; lo, I have told you:" *i.e.* be sure and remember to deliver this message correctly. Nay, it was repeated in the same terms almost immediately, and on the highest authority, by the Lord Jesus Himself. "Go, tell My brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." It was quite plain that our Lord Himself looked forward, and would have His disciples look forward, to this meeting in Galilee as one of unusual dignity and importance, whatever appearances and intercourse might have in the meanwhile taken place. And there seems every probability, from comparison of the different accounts, that our Lord held it in reserve to the last, the only one after it being that on the very day and at the very time of His ascension.

It is clear from St. Matthew's narrative that the Lord had made a distinct appointment, and fixed a particular locality for this solemn meeting. That was done doubtless while the disciples were still at Jerusalem, as we know they were still after the octave of the resurrection. The same tender consideration for them, which had urged them in a time of unusual pressure to "come into a desert place and rest awhile," would now advise their departure from Jerusalem, where they could only meet with closed doors for fear of the Jews, and their taking some refreshment to their spirits in the associations and employments of their old homes—for the faithful eleven, now that Iscariot was gone to his own place, were all Galileans. And so they went, on some early day; and doubtless the beloved disciple, who had the precious charge of the Virgin Mother in his own lodging at Jerusalem, kept her

close by him as he revisited the scenes of his earlier days, near the Lake of Gennesareth.

And there we find the Lord fulfilling His promise, first of all, as a commencement, to seven of the holy band, with manifestations and words of the most affecting interest. But He had further purposes than this. His appointment with them was not by the lake-side, but on a particular specified mountain; one, clearly, which they knew, by earlier associations, as the scene, it may be, of His first great sermon, or that of His transfiguration. As in all other cases, "Jesus knew what He would do." What He had done and said as yet was but preparatory to the grand scene now at hand, which was to be on a greater and more solemn scale than anything before; and in which the spot chosen, and those that were to be assembled there, would be a parable illustrative of the great words which the Lord was about to speak.[1]

For the country chosen was, not Judæa, but Galilee, Galilee of the nations, the circuit or district into which in former times heathen and foreigners had been brought in, and where they still carried on, with those of Jewish race intermingled, a busy commercial life and intercourse with other lands. And the audience chosen was by far the largest that was privileged to witness the risen Saviour—above five hundred brethren at once—for it cannot well be doubted that it was to this time, and to this place, that the Apostle Paul referred when he recorded this appearance, with others; and we shall be helped to form our estimate of the number by comparing it with the one hundred and twenty

[1] I am aware that Maldonatus, with others, considers it "probable" that this commission was issued later, and in Judæa. The "probabilities" on the other side are strong enough, I believe, to warrant the view taken above.

names which alone were gathered at Jerusalem, even by our Lord's command. In Galilee of the Gentiles He had spent His first thirty years; in Galilee His earliest ministrations had been exercised; from Galilee, with one exception, He had chosen His College of Apostles.

They, then, had been prepared by earlier intercourse vouchsafed; their hesitation had been removed previously; and so, when they saw Him now once more, "they worshipped Him." "Some," not of their number, but "others" as the Greek should be rendered, others from among the five hundred "doubted"—but only, we may well believe, for a time. For now the King was appearing in the beauty of His glorified Body, and was about to issue His Royal Proclamation; the only one, as being of supreme importance, which the Evangelist St. Matthew has recorded, and with the sublime and far-reaching words of which he has closed his Gospel.

Addressing Himself then with affectionate approach to the Apostles whom He had chosen, but in the audience, as we believe, of the body of the disciples at large, Emmanuel the King, in His human but spiritual Body, standing on the Galilean hill, opens His mouth, and says, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Let us try and fix in our conceptions the meaning of these august words. They are not of course to be understood of the Godhead, in which the Son was "of one substance, power and eternity" with the Father; but of the Manhood after the Incarnation. Once, indeed, the Incarnate Son had rejected with indignation a specious offer made Him of the power of the kingdoms of the world, by one who claimed the right to give it Him. But now He had earned it, as His own right, being

"declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." And the extent—the universality—of that power is described in this eloquent passage of Holy Writ: "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord." This was the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, that "there should be given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him." This, too, was the answer, to be hastened in its due time, by the eternal Father to His eternal Son: "Desire of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." "For He hath put all things under His feet." This assertion by the risen Lord of His universal, eternal Royalty must be, and will be, most precious and assuring to each of us, as a fundamental article of our faith, the charter itself of the kingdom of God.

By virtue of this inalienable prerogative, the King appoints His own delegates, and delivers to them His royal commission over a sphere co-extensive with His own dominion. "Go ye therefore—go ye—make disciples of all nations, by baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." They had been disciples themselves; they were now constituted Missionaries. Once they had been forbidden to go into the way of the Gentiles. *Their* time had not yet come. But now every conceivable barrier was thrown down. Henceforth there was "neither to be Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." Far and wide as any of the newly-

made Missionaries might go, and as we believe did go, there were regions further and wider still. "*All* authority" claimed "*all* the nations" for its rightful possession. None could be reckoned too distant, none too insignificant, none too ignorant, none too degraded. This is the peculiar glory of the Messiah's kingdom. The gates of admission are thrown open as widely as possible. And by "all nations" are to be understood all ages in all nations, from infancy upwards; as if the Lord would interpret His own orders by the Divine condition of the earlier covenant which, from the days of Abraham, for nearly 2000 years, gave the privileges of it to infants of eight days old, and by the established custom of later times among the Jews, to baptize infants together with full-grown proselytes. The comprehensive interpretation needed not therefore to be newly expressed. And so the subjects of the new kingdom were to be enrolled by the distinct rite, familiar indeed in its outward form, but with new, solemn, and significant words, expressing the sum total of the faith required, and incorporating the new members into the Name—the ineffable Name—of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, our watchword for the extension of the kingdom is "One body, and one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

It was implied in the evangelical commission that, previous to the administration of the initiatory rite, all candidates should be made to understand the terms and meaning of the faith into which they were to be baptized. But the King supplied His delegates with special instructions for their subsequent guidance. "Teaching them," He said, "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." By this order He referred them to His own

teaching during His three years' training of them, and especially to the fuller teaching after His resurrection "on the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," its constitution, its government, its privileges, and the faith and duty of its subjects.

But what an overwhelming responsibility, what a task, to all appearance impossible, was, in this solemn injunction, laid upon those eleven men, by One who, though claiming universal power, was about to depart from them almost immediately! Nay, but He knew all this Himself. And therefore once more, having approached them with all royal gracious affection, He continues, and gathers into a few words the announcement of His magnificent, all-sustaining, all-enabling promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." So then they were not to be, as they might have apprehended, delegates of an absent, but the visible representatives of an invisible present Lord. They were constituted a perpetual corporation, to whose custody these words were consigned. And what an inexhaustible fountain of strength and consolation they supplied, to which every single word contributed its share. "Lo! Look here! Fix on Me your faith, your hearts, your hopes, for I am"—not, I will be, but the ever-living I AM—the God-Man—"your King, of power unlimited—with you, above you, before you, behind you, under you, round about you, all the days—*all* power for making disciples of *all* nations, to teach them *all* things, to reach to *all* time, even to the very consummation of the age." "I am alway—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; you, too, alway, by virtue of perpetual succession in the Missionary office now committed to you, for the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. Here is the seal of your authority; here

the ground of your confidence: ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

And so it came to pass on the appointed day, when the Feast of Pentecost had fully come. And the Acts of the Apostles are the inspired commentary on this wonderful proclamation made to them on the mountain in Galilee. And, it must always be remembered, these first Missionaries were engaged in their several fields of labour before even a single book of the New Testament was written.

Thus, of the royalty—"God hath made Jesus both Lord and Christ"—"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a prince and a saviour." Of the baptismal commission—"He commanded us to preach unto the people, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him should receive remission of sins." "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him." "He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, that they should seek the Lord." Of the King's instructions "I" (says one) "have shown you, and have taught you publicly, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Of the perpetual Presence, "the Lord worked with them, confirming the word with signs following," both in preaching, in baptizing, in the laying-on of hands, in the breaking of the bread, and in the use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

The Apostles stood in the royal Presence on the mountain in Galilee as the representatives of a continuous line of ordained ministers in future

times. What, then, about the five hundred brethren who, we may be sure, heard the great charge and commission, which gift, though concentrated in the Apostles, was diffused in its value and obligation through the whole body of believers? Did not those five hundred stand as the representatives of all the generations in future times of the Christian laity? And is not each one of you, my brethren, thus directly included in the duty and privilege of propagating the Gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ to every nation under heaven, by the instrumentality of duly qualified pastors and teachers? One part you may take in this great work was foreshown in the encouraging words addressed by one of the Apostles to a good and zealous layman of his time: "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the Church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well; because that for His Name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We ought, therefore, to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." III John 5-8.

Let me commend to your attention one more consideration, by way of analogy. Those great words, "Take, eat, this is My Body, drink, this is My Blood, do this," were spoken once, and once for all, by the Lord Jesus, on the night of His betrayal, but they carry in them perpetual force and efficacy, for at every celebration of the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood, they are recited in His name by the officiating priest, and, as the words of institution, are essential and efficacious for every Eucharist till the Lord shall come.[1] So

[1] St. Chrysostom, in dwelling upon this, illustrates his remarks by an analogy from the Divine words at the Creation,

in like manner is it with the great words we have heard to-day. They were spoken once, and once for all, on the mountain in Galilee, but "their sound is gone out into all lands, and the words unto the ends of the world." Statistics, narratives, details, are all most interesting and useful in Missionary meetings and periodicals; but high above all and embracing all, in our solemn assembling of ourselves together, especially in this great metropolitical cathedral, there must ever sound forth those majestic parting words of our supreme King, the "marching orders," once for all issued by the Prince of life, the Captain of our salvation, "whom God raised from the dead, and gave Him glory"; in which all of us in every successive age are bound to take our allotted parts: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

And, finally, on this "Sunday of the Good Shepherd," I would combine herewith those tender, loving words, letting us even more into the great heart of the Divine Speaker, and I would ask you, one and all, to "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," as He spake and said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; nad there shall become one flock, one Shepherd."

"Increase and multiply and replenish the earth," spoken once for all, but effective in every generation for the procreation of children. *Homil. I. De Proditione Judæ.*

III

THE RELATION OF THE HOLY GHOST TO MISSIONARIES AND MISSIONS

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on April 16, 1893 (*Second Sunday after Easter*).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."—ACTS i. 8.

THE general subject on which I have to address you this afternoon has been already notified to you on the Cathedral Services Form. It is a custom in this cathedral that, on the Second Sunday after Easter, the afternoon sermon shall be one on the Foreign Christian Missions of the Church. And the reason is, that, in addition to the appeals that are made to you on other Sundays for help towards one or other of the Missionary societies of the Church of England, your attention should be drawn, on one particular Sunday, to Church Missions in general, in their obligation, their motives, their encouragements, or their history—your attention, of course, not to end in nothing when the sermon is ended, but to issue in a year-long active interest in the cause of Missions, which, of course, is year-long and never comes to an end. God grant it may be so with you, and with all the members of the Church everywhere!

In the last sermon I preached on this—the Sunday of the Good Shepherd, as it is beautifully called—I dwelt in much detail upon the standing commission given by the Divine Head of the Christian Church to His Apostles whom He had chosen, in these memorable words: "Go ye, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Every word in this utterance—command, conditions, promise—is on the grandest scale. But how about the promise, "I am with you alway," when, as we know, the Promiser was very soon taken from them, and "a cloud received Him out of their sight"? How, then, could He, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, be with His Apostles on earth in their arduous mission, and with their successors to the end of time? My Christian brethren, it is His own answer to this question, His answer by word or deed, to which I would now invite your close attention. For the Lord was going to have a Divine Agent, His Divine Vicar, even the Holy Spirit of God, to represent His perpetual Presence with His Church in her Missionary work, unto the end of the world.

The all-important subject, then, for us to consider to-day is *the essential relation of the Holy Ghost to Missionaries and Missions.* We are going, you see, to the very root of the subject of Missions, as we study the Pentecostal and continuous operation of that Divine Being after whom the whole of the present stage of revelation takes its name, being rightly called the Dispens-

ation of the Spirit. And on such a subject we may well take upon our lips, and offer in our hearts, the petition of our Whitsuntide Collect, and pray that "God, who as at that time did teach the hearts of His faithful people, by sending to them the light of His Holy Spirit, would grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things."

Our enquiry, observe, is a definite one, and I wish to keep myself and you within the proper limits of it. It is not our object to-day to treat of the regenerating, sanctifying, guiding, comforting influences of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts and lives of individual believers; rather, we are now to regard Him as the Almighty Agent in Creation, the Divine Author and Giver of all good gifts, whether of power, of wisdom, of strength, or of skill; the inexhaustible Fountain of qualities which fit a human being for any office he may be called to fill.

It will be well, I think, that we should draw our first illustrations of the Spirit's work in these respects from the Old Testament; for we shall rightly regard them as prophetic and preparatory, wonderful in themselves, but to be followed, in due time, by more wonderful manifestations still.

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Upon that motion, thus simply but sublimely narrated, depended all creation through its several stages.[1]

"Truly (to render some words of Elihu more exactly than in our version) it is the Spirit (*i.e.* the Divine Spirit) in man, and the breath of God, which giveth him understanding."

[1] Job xxvi. 13; xxxiii. 4; Psalm xxxiii. 6.

Thus it was with Joseph, when brought out of prison to the Court of Pharaoh. It was the Spirit of God[1] who was fitting His servant for solving one of the most difficult political and social problems ever presented to a statesman. Thus it was with Bezaleel and Aholiab, who were filled (as the narrative words it) with the "Spirit of God," for the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Thus it was with Joshua, when appointed to the military command of the people of Israel, because he was "a man in whom was the Spirit," pointing him out as qualified, and entitled, after the laying-on of hands, for his arduous office. Thus it was with the seventy men of the elders of Israel; when "the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease." It was their credential for their new office. And still more remarkable was the extraordinary action of the Spirit upon the two who were outwardly separated from their brethren, when Moses displayed a largeness of heart in a saying which has almost become proverbial, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" *i.e.* to enable them to fulfil such a high office. Thus, even of that strangely mixed character, who approved of what was right and followed what was wrong, Balaam, the son of Beor, we read expressly, that after he had ceased to seek for enchantments, "the Spirit of God came upon him." A still more striking illustration of the working of the Holy Ghost in Old Testament times is supplied by Saul, in the earlier part of his reign. One sign of his being chosen and approved of as king was

[1] Gen. xli. 38.

foretold him by Samuel: "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man. And it was so, that God gave him another heart, and the Spirit of God came upon him." Alas! Saul became an illustration of another solemn truth, that the Spirit of God would not always strive with man; for we read, as the history goes on, that "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul; and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." By the melancholy declension of King Saul from his earlier promise, we may learn the distinction to be made between the gift of ordination and the grace of ordination.

The successor of Saul on the throne of Israel was a man of a very different stamp. As the sweet Psalmist of Israel, he could say, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me," spake words of inspired devotion and of undoubted prophecy.

Like David who was their forerunner, the goodly fellowship of the prophets all claimed as their authority the Spirit of the Lord, not for forming their personal character, but for qualifying and enabling them for their office. Let Micah speak for all his brethren as well as for himself when he says, "Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin."

But there are two classes of passages treating of the action of the Spirit of God, with clear regard to future times, which claim our particular attention as pertaining to the very heart of our subject to-day. "There shall come (says Isaiah) a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of His roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Not of himself, but of some other man. And all doubt is dispelled when One comes forward and claims the prerogatives as inalienably His own, saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me." And again, summoning us to listen, "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent Me." What a burst of revelation have we here! Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! Enough to quicken the highest expectations; but in due time they shall be, they have been, fulfilled to the very letter. Stand by the river Jordan; read, hear, and see; "Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" Could the correspondence between the Old Testament and the New herein be more exact? And so, too, in the synagogue at Nazareth, when Jesus read the second Lesson for the day, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me," and added, as all eyes were fastened upon Him, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." He exhibited His undoubted credentials. And His forerunner on another occasion asserted them in their very highest force, saying, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him," for "I saw (*i.e.* at His

baptism) and bare record that this is the Son of God."

I have now, as you will see, my brethren, arrived at the central and culminating point of this day's discourse. We have hitherto been on the ascent, in the view that has passed before us of typical prophets in the Old Testament; we shall presently be on the descent, in the view that will come before us, of delegated Apostles and prophets of the New Testament, all of them gifted with some measure of the Spirit for the offices severally entrusted to them. But here stands before us, in pre-eminent unapproachable dignity, the Divine Prophet of His Church, the Divine Missionary to a fallen world, conceived by the Holy Ghost, come down and dwelling upon earth to exercise His ministry of love and mercy and power among the children of men. "Consider, then, holy brethren, the Apostle of our profession, Christ Jesus." But, especially to-day, consider how and by whom He was inaugurated and prepared. Prophets of old were anointed for their office. Jesus Christ, too, was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power." Of Him we may say, adapting His own words to His disciples (as in our text), "He received power, after that the Holy Ghost came upon Him." That was especially (as we have just seen) at His baptism. The immediate sequel—the necessary sequel, no doubt, as on the other hand it was the prelude to His ministry—was the Temptation. At this stage the action of the Holy Ghost upon Him, mysterious in its character and exact purpose, but doubtless designed to prove and qualify the Man, Christ Jesus, for the great work awaiting Him, is described with very remarkable clearness (in varied forms of expression) by the

Synoptic Evangelists. "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."[1] Such was the ordeal through which the Anointed One had to pass on His way to the ministry. But He issued from it, as we thankfully know, not only victorious, but still full of the Holy Ghost, for we read that "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee" to be "about His Father's business," and the first opening of His mouth which St. Luke records was the application to Himself of the old words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me."[2] In short, to sum up the lesson we learn in this branch of our enquiry, the essential relation of the Holy Ghost to Missions has its highest illustration in the history of the Prince and Head of all Missionaries—Jesus Christ, the Anointed of God. And, as says the Apostle, "He was faithful to Him that appointed Him."

But now we have to say, that the Divine Spirit's office was not only to constitute Him a Missionary, but to set Him at the head of a school or college of Missionaries. And so very early in the history we read that "He called unto Him whom He would; and of them He chose twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." How He trained, schooled, and taught them those three eventful years the Gospels tell us in much detail; but our concern to-day is with the latest stages of the Master's instruction, just before His Passion, and after His resurrection. They had hitherto been disciples, learners; they were presently to become Apostles, Missionaries. They had begun at last to feel that something terrible in

[1] St. Matt. iv. 1; St. Mark i. 12; St. Luke iv. 1.
[2] "I cast out devils by the Spirit of God." St. Matt. xii. 28.

their experience was going to happen, and sorrow filled their hearts at the prospect of losing their beloved Master. To Him they had been able to resort in all their difficulties; how could they, in coming time, avail themselves of that cherished and necessary privilege? "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?"

> "My Saviour, can it ever be
> That I should gain by losing Thee?"

The gracious, foreseeing answer was ready.

"I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away." And then He opened up for them a new chapter of encouraging instructions, delivered to them not as disciples, but as, shortly to become, teachers and Missionaries in the Church He was about to found. "Every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." As with Him at the approach and the outset of His ministry, the pouring-out of the Holy Ghost was essential to His accomplishment of it, so would it be with them.

Hearken then to His words: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth." "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "And ye also shall bear witness." "Take no thought what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." "I will send Him unto you from the Father." "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

In continuation of these gracious promises, after

His resurrection, when His slowly-believing disciples had at last taken in the truth of the fact, the Lord solemnly pronounced over them the charter of their future Mission, and conveyed to them by a significant act the authority of the Holy Ghost, an earnest from Himself in token of larger measures for exercising that Mission. "Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." After this there remained one duty enjoined upon them, and one promise made to them. "Wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father." "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The Lord, in what He had said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," had now fully interpreted His meaning. His disciples obeyed His words, and received the fulness of His promise. "The Spirit came upon them, and they were turned into other men."

"Other men." Yes, and observe this marvellous change was the sole work of the promised Comforter—the Strengthener, as that English word strictly means—the Holy Ghost. The proofs of that change, and of the extraordinary power with which they entered upon and exercised their apostolical ministry, we shall see in the narrative supplied to us by the inspired pen of St. Luke.

But we shall still more truly estimate the extent and depth of that change, by contrasting what they had been before, with what they now became. They enjoyed the benefit of the presence, example, and teaching of their Master during the whole of His ministry. They certainly were very much

attached to Him, and proud of their relationship to Him.[1] They asked Him all sorts of questions, some of them sensible, others quite of a different character. Their tone of mind was very dull—their spirit very narrow. Their notions of the future were of the earth, earthy. They were at strife with one another "which of them should be accounted the greatest" in the imaginary kingdom they had pictured to themselves. They kept to this notion even to the last of their Master's presence with them, as they showed by their question, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" All this dulness and narrowness made it necessary for their patient Master to administer frequent reproof to them: "How is it that ye do not understand?" "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." "He that is greatest among you, let him be your minister; and he that is chief as he that doth serve." Peter, on one occasion, took upon himself to rebuke his Master for hinting at His impending sufferings—a mark of fervent attachment indeed, but of one utterly unable to understand his Master's mind. And so he was warned, and his brethren were warned, that in the day of real trial he and all of them would fail Him. And so it was that "they all forsook Him and fled." And these were the men chosen to evangelize the world! Surely they needed some qualification for such an office which a three years' schooling, and with such a Master too, had failed to produce. They had still one more chance—after His resurrection. That unparalleled event, it is true, is the more confirmed to us by the doubts and disbelief of the eleven disciples, and those of Thomas above all. The news "seemed to them as idle tales."

[1] St. John iv. 31.

But their state of mind—honest, dull, bewildered—is several times described by the Evangelists, St. Mark especially. "He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen." Even the Sadducees had perceived, as we are told later on, that they were illiterate men, without any professional education, and had been of the company of Jesus.[1]

It is essential, my brethren, with the object we have in view, that we see what instruments they were whom the Lord chose, and how naturally unfit they were for the work of unparalleled difficulty which was to be committed to them, in order to estimate the mighty force of that operation which was to be wrought in them. Verily the excellency of the power was not in them, who were but earthen vessels, but in God. And we exclaim, "It is indeed the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." And yet we must not omit to take note of one condition on which this marvel was brought to pass. Whatever the disciples lacked, there were at all events two lessons which they had learnt from their beloved Master; one was implicit obedience, the other, cordial union with one another. And so, in compliance with His parting injunction, they repaired at once to the Temple, and there and in the well-loved upper room they continued steadfastly and fervently for ten days with one accord in prayer and supplication for the fulfilment of their Master's promise. Then the answer came. "The rushing mighty wind," "the tongues of fire," were the outward emblems of the mighty Spirit of God, em-

[1] Acts iv. 13.

powering them at once and all-sufficiently for the office and work of the world-converting Mission on which they now started. But besides these two, there was a third sign, still more striking, of this miraculous Divine agency: "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak (not yet to the multitude, but to one another) with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." And the subject was the wonderful work that God had wrought. And something still more wonderful was to ensue. There were Jews at that time at Jerusalem out of every nation under heaven, speaking the languages of their native countries. They now came together to see the amazing sight, and to hear the amazing sounds; and, passing all experience and comprehension, the sounds were intelligible sense to every one of them, and they knew them to express "the wonderful works of God," although with a Galilean accent, yet clearly and distinctly in their own several languages.[1]

And now look at Peter and the rest of the Apostles. All timidity, all the old imperfections, utterly gone; their manner, their speech, their matter, marked by the utmost boldness, clearness, force, and irresistible persuasion, so that the consciences of the hearers were smitten at once, and three thousand of them at that very time accepted the conditions imposed upon them by the Apostles, and joined their new society. The climax of all was that they too received the Holy Ghost, and, as Peter reminded them, this was the beginning of the fulfilment of that second class of prophecies (to which I adverted a little while back), of which the

[1] See Bishop Magee's Sermon, preached in Canterbury Cathedral, on "The Gift of Tongues at Pentecost," p. 159 *et seq.*

one found in Joel was the chief, that "in the last days God would pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh," of all ages and classes and both sexes, with extraordinary signs following.

The Apostles themselves were the first and signal instances of the fulfilment of this prophecy. They remembered their Master's words, for now they had received power, after that the Holy Ghost had come upon them. And when the exercise of this new power was forbidden them by their foes, they "prayed again with one accord, and the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." They publicly avowed themselves to be "witnesses" by the power of the Holy Ghost. When the increase of the number of the disciples demanded the creation of a new ministerial office, the condition on which men were to be selected was that they should be "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Stephen, the chief of them, delivered his irresistible testimony with wisdom and the Spirit, and was "full of the Holy Ghost" to the very moment of his martyrdom. When Peter, on the eve of Church extension, wist not what he should do, the Spirit spoke to him words of advice; and (as he said) "the Spirit bade me go, nothing doubting." The result was the coming down of the same Spirit on others as well as on himself. One of the earliest Missionaries to the heathen world was described as being "full of the Holy Ghost." And it was the same Holy Ghost who issued the commission to "separate" him and his friend, the converted Saul, for the new "work to which He had Himself called them." And it was "by the Holy Ghost," as we expressly read, that they were "sent forth." At

the very outset of their Mission they were confronted by most virulent opposition, but Saul was more than equal to the crisis; and why? Because he was "filled with the Holy Ghost." Thus the Holy Ghost strengthened His Missionary servants. But He also directed them in their journey, where they should go, and where they should not go. Thus, they "were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia"; and when, again, their own mind "was to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not." The action of the Spirit was further and still more remarkably exemplified in St. Paul in binding, even compelling, him to go into the very heart of danger. "I go," said he, "bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem," "knowing only that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, that bonds and afflictions abide me." Indeed those who spake "through the Spirit" in this very matter kindly would have dissuaded him, beginning with the words, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost." But he stood firm, and the Lord stood by him in the night and cheered him with His approval.

Once more the great Apostle, remembering it was the Holy Ghost who had called and sent him out on his first Mission, impressed the same truth on the elders of the Church of Ephesus in his Apostolical charge: "The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers over the flock."[1]

And now, my brethren, it is time we bring our Scripture studies on the great topic before us to a close, and to a practical issue; for all that we have had before us is not only a history of the past, but a practical guide for the present.

We learn that the connection of the Holy Ghost

[1] To which may be appended other words of his by way of explanation. 1 Cor. xii. 7—11.

with Missions is most intimate and essential to their life. We learn that a Missionary ought to be one called to that office by God the Holy Ghost; ought to be fitted, empowered, for that office, by God the Holy Ghost; ought to be sent out on his Mission, like Saul and Barnabas, by God the Holy Ghost; ought to be guided and controlled in the exercise of that office by God the Holy Ghost; ought to "continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost." So far for the Missionary; and what, in conclusion, for each of you, my brethren? I must needs put it very briefly, but I put it pointedly, so that you may the more faithfully carry it into practice. When, therefore, Missionaries are set apart and sent out to Mission work, it is for you to offer up for them the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, as you find it in the Ordination Service; and throughout their course it is for you to offer up for them and for their work the prayer you find in the Daily Office of the Church, that the "Almighty and everlasting God, who wrought that marvel on the day of Pentecost, would send down upon them and it the healthful Spirit of His grace, and pour upon them the continual dew of His blessing." Without that, a Mission will surely die; with it, it cannot but flourish and succeed.—ISAIAH lxiv. 1—5.

IV

THE THINGS PERTAINING TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, April 8, 1894 (*the Second Sunday after Easter*).

"The things pertaining to the kingdom of God."—ACTS i. 3.

THE verse in which these words are found presents to us in brief, but expressive terms, the two main objects of our blessed Lord's intercourse with His chosen disciples, during the great forty days between His resurrection and His ascension; the first being to "show Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs"; the second, to "speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The first was the foundation, the second the superstructure they were to rear upon it.

Belief in the first is vital to our own salvation; the right knowledge of the second is vital to our efforts in seeking the salvation of others, and therefore vital in our prosecution of Christian Missions, to a share in which work each of you, my brethren, is called imperatively, by virtue of your own Christian profession and privileges. I say it is essential to your success herein, that you think and act according to the mind and instructions of the great Master and Head of His Church, which He first of all made known to His disciples, and to

which I am now about to invite your patient attention.

It was the custom of Jesus Christ to refer His disciples—as, of course, He also refers us—to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He did this especially, as you know, during these forty days. And so, in obedience to His direction, we "search the Scriptures" for any prophetical mention of a spiritual kingdom.[1]

The prophet Daniel, speaking of the times of the kings of the earth which were yet for to come, uttered this remarkable prediction: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people." The origin and world-wide extension of this kingdom were symbolized in the king's dream, you will remember, by "a stone cut out without hands, which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Well, therefore, might it be called "the kingdom of God," or "the kingdom of heaven." Indeed, later on, in the prophecies of Daniel, this appellation was fixed by a further revelation of characteristics. "I saw," he says, "and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

[1] Compare the remarkable expression, "a kingdom of priests," in Exod. xix. 6, with "the Church of the firstborn" (Heb. xii. 23), and "He hath made us to be a kingdom" (Rev. i. 6, R.V.).

Observe now, in this prophecy of the future, that not only the kingdom is described, but the King of that kingdom, by an essential and unique distinction. But this, as we may find by our searching of the Scriptures, had been revealed in earlier times. "The sceptre," prophesied the dying Jacob, "shall not depart from Judah, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." "I shall see Him," is the parable of Balaam, "but not now: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." The Psalmist sang of "the things which he had made touching the King"—none other, we may be sure, than "the King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts," passing through the "everlasting doors," and "set" by the Lord of all "upon the holy hill of Sion," nay, seated "at the right hand of the Majesty on high, expecting till his enemies be made His footstool"; a King that should "reign in righteousness"; a King who should "reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth"; a King bearing the name of His human ancestor, David, the Shepherd-King; a King, "just, and having salvation, yet lowly, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

These, and other similar predictions, took fast hold of the Jewish mind, and the titles, "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven," were current phrases with the Rabbinical teachers of the nation, while the common people looked forward to the restoration of the glories of the reigns of David and Solomon. The wise men from the East exemplified a widespread expectation in their question, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews?" But others there were who quietly took a more spiritual view of the prospect, and, like Simeon, Anna, and

Joseph of Arimathea, "waited for the kingdom of God."

At length, "when the fulness of the time was come," John the Baptist announced that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand"; and not only so, but announced the King Himself, crying, as His forerunner, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." More remarkable still, Jesus Christ Himself opened His own ministry with the very same announcement—"From that time He began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And in His commission to His disciples He kept to the same language—"As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and so "He sent them to preach the kingdom of God." And, to one in particular, His charge was contained in like pregnant expression—"Go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

What, now, was the meaning of these words, into which the Divine Prophet of the new dispensation was pleased to compress the grand subject of His own and of their Mission to the world? He had it constantly before His own mind, and He set it before theirs in the course of His ministry for their guidance and instruction, explaining thereby its universality, its heavenliness, and its permanency. As I have already said, it concerns us, as supporters of Christian Missions, to study His words, and to keep to His mind and purpose.

Let us then dutifully listen to our Master's teaching on this important subject, while He tells us of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." As at the beginning, so in the early days of His ministry, He "went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God," the good news of the Divine

rule, of which He was the supreme Administrator. When the people would have detained Him longer, He said, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent." And so we read, "It came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him," learning, of course, how in due time and in their turn they should do the same. In the opening benedictions of His Sermon on the Mount, He describes the character and experience of those who should be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, "exalting them of low degree." "Make it the first object of your care," He taught, "to become and continue members of the kingdom of God, and its spiritual privileges; other good things of this world will be in such case added unto you, and be blest to you. But, beware, the kingdom of God may be taken from you, and given to others who will bring forth the proper fruits thereof; and so it will be that the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, because of their unprofitableness, and their places shall be taken by many who shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." For "whosoever shall do and teach" My commandments, "the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," when the end shall come. To the honest inquirer Nicodemus, who had accepted the Divine Mission of this new Teacher, He had but one thing to say, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And if he would not only understand it, but enter into it, he must needs go in by the one appointed door of baptism, not the outward wash-

ing alone of water, but the inward action thereby of the promised Spirit.

It is, however, in the Gospel according to St. Matthew that we find most frequent mention of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," and this is as we should expect, for that Gospel was written primarily for the sake of the Jews, to show how the Old Testament was fulfilled in the New, and particularly how the rule of Jehovah, as the King of His people of old, was to be and was carried on by "Messiah the Prince" in the government of His Church, "to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

We read, then, in St. Matthew that, after a time, our blessed Lord adopted a new method of teaching, owing to the insensibility of the multitude in receiving His words. "He began to speak to them in parables," and what they could not, or would not, understand, He expounded fully in private afterwards to His disciples. These parables, and many others spoken on subsequent occasions, were all on the very subject with which He Himself introduced them, "The kingdom of heaven." They were taught, by chosen similitudes and stories from common life, the characteristics, the varied aspects, the future experiences, of that kingdom, and specially thereby of the Church—"My Church," as the Speaker elsewhere called it—which was to be the grand exhibition of His Divine rule. Thus the disciples were taught, and we after them, in the Parable of the Sower, how the word of the kingdom is received by various classes of mankind to whom it is delivered by human agency, by some to absolute, by others to speedy or ultimate failure, by some happily to a successful issue. In the

Parable of the Tares, they learnt, as we do, the origin and the presence of evil in the very midst of the kingdom of God, the visible Church, and withal the reason of its being permitted till its final extirpation; in the Parable of the Grain of Mustard-seed, we see the kingdom of God in its incipient stage, and then in its aspects of growth and extension; in the Parable of the Leaven, we contemplate the same in its pervasive and regenerative character; in the Parable of the Hid Treasure, we have the joy of discovery of the good news of the kingdom, while the companion Parable of the Pearls illustrates the same joy, resulting, not from accident, as in the other case, but after deliberate search; in the Parable of the Draw-net, the important lesson is conveyed that in the kingdom of heaven, which is the kingdom of grace, there is a mixture of good and bad subjects, a mixture that will continue to the very last step of selection and unsparing separation.[1] The Divine Teacher was particularly anxious that His school of chosen disciples should not only understand His meaning in these several parables, but, as future teachers themselves, should be qualified to adopt the same applied methods. And He plainly, for the first time, delivered to them the precise terms of the office they were to bear, to be stamped for the future upon them. Observe, they were to be "scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," or, as in R.V., "scribes made disciples to the kingdom of heaven," a conception of their office which assuredly they were not likely to forget in their execution of it, and which, as we shall see presently, their Master's parting "commandment" would enlarge and fix upon them still more definitely.

[1] See Bishop Ellicott's *Historical Lectures*, p. 21, *n.*

Meanwhile, He continued from time to time the series of lessons on the nature and character of His kingdom, both in parables and direct conversation, Himself supplying this key of interpretation, and foreshadowing the transfer of privileges from the children of the kingdom to others who should be admitted into the new kingdom of the Messiah.

Moreover, by significant actions, He taught His future ministers of the kingdom what manner of spirit would qualify for the highest places in it. Indeed, they needed much instruction herein, for certainly two of their number, and those the most favoured, being encouraged by their mother, made the bold request of ignorance, that they might "sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left" in His kingdom. They met with deserved reproof, and received instruction, which has since passed into a proverb, and found its expression in one of the daily Collects of the Church—"Whom to serve is to reign."[1] Nay, they were encouraged by the promise that to sacrifice what was most naturally precious to them, "for the kingdom of God's sake," was the surest way to present advantage, and to future glory. The Jewish Scribes, we know, were mostly the subject of the Lord's severe reproof; but one exception is recorded, to whom the Lord said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," the true spirit of which rule He had so discreetly expressed.

But to return to the disciples. Their office in the new kingdom had been shadowed out to them. But now to office is assigned authority, linking earth to heaven in bonds indissoluble. Speaking to Peter, the representative herein of the whole

[1] "Cui servire regnare est." "Whose service is perfect freedom."—Collect for Peace.

body, who were shortly invested with the very same authority, the Lord spake thus: "I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Nothing, we might imagine, could go beyond this. The possession and use of the keys of the kingdom would seem to include everything. And yet something more was added by the supreme King—now at last openly declaring Himself to His disciples—before the day that He was delivered up, and avowed His kingship to Pilate and the council. The words are so solemn, so decided, so pregnant, so far-reaching, from the first building of the Church to the top stone placed upon it at the last, that we must reverently and entirely receive them, not attempting in our present rehearsal of them to introduce conjectures of their meaning, or interpretations of their fulfilment, but chiefly to call attention to the important fact, that Jesus Christ steadfastly kept to the great theme with which He began His ministry to the very end—"the kingdom of heaven," or "the kingdom of God." These, then, are His words—

"I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Where, take notice that, just before, He had instituted the Holy Sacrament of eating His Body, and drinking His Blood, at His table in the upper room, adding the words, "I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God," "until that

day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Thus, at the close of His three years' training of His future ministers, did their Divine Teacher lift up the curtain for a few moments, that they might have a glimpse of the kingdom of glory. The request made a short time before by James and John, and the contest of the whole body which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of which they had heard so much, and as yet knew so little, showed how unqualified they were to appreciate the grand future. Indeed, the very last recorded question they put to Him betokened, as we may deem, a singularly mistaken apprehension of things: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

If the Apostles who were in such close intercourse with the blessed Jesus had so signally failed, up to this time, in any conception of the glory that was to follow in the future, we might naturally despair of finding the least glimpse of it in any other quarter. But thank God for the unexpected discovery!—"The king is reigning from the tree." From the mouth of a malefactor, crucified at His side for his misdeeds, and joining his comrade only just before in jeers and revilings, there issues, to our amazement at the power of Divine grace in the briefest space of time, the prayer to that very Man whom he had reviled, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." Yes, the penitent robber at one bound had outstripped every disciple and companion of Jesus of Nazareth, and recognized in Him the King of Glory. To him the kingdom of grace, of God, of heaven, of glory, was one continued royalty, and the Crucified at his side was the everlasting King.

At this point, my dear brethren, we may pause

for a moment to review the course of our inquiry. At our Lord's bidding we first of all searched the old Scriptures; and then we searched the inspired records of His life, and especially of His teaching—of course only imperfectly on the present occasion—and yet, I am sure, it will have been our best preparation for understanding what would be the tenor of our Lord's discourse with His disciples after He rose from the dead on "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

But He has vouchsafed to us still further help herein, by leaving us on record in the holy Gospels some of the precious words then spoken by Him. The historian says that, before He gave His last injunction not to depart from Jerusalem, He had given, "through the Holy Ghost, commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen." Naturally, He began with the assertion of His own unqualified, universal, eternal royalty. "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and in earth; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Thus, after His resurrection, He took His rightful title, which, after His ascension, He was about to inaugurate, by sitting "at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Henceforth it is He, this Son of Man, Who would be King over that "kingdom of God" of which He had already spoken so much—a kingdom, not from this world, but from heaven as its origin, and to heaven as its end, the same kingdom, whether of grace in this world or of glory in the world to come. We may be sure that He would continue and carry on the teaching of His three years' ministry concerning the laws, the principles, and the charter of this kingdom: of which we can form no other conception than what we should at once entertain in any other case, that it should

have a visible expression, a corporate existence, the Church of His own foundation, to last from that beginning till the very end of the days, when He should "present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

This conception is clearly proved when we come to consider "the commandments" which we find actually recorded. They are these: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." "Ye shall be (*i. e.* I enjoin you to be) witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." "Feed My lambs." "Tend My sheep." But mark what was to follow upon the preaching: "Go ye, make disciples of all nations;" by "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" "baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," that they may be "born of water and of the Spirit," and so may "enter into the kingdom of God." Thus did the King ordain His own saying to become a sacrament of perpetual obligation for entrance into His Church and kingdom. We cannot doubt that He did the same for the other great sacrament of His Body and Blood, when we call to mind not only His discourse at Capernaum, but His words, which we quoted a while ago, spoken in the upper room on Maundy Thursday.

But there is another recorded command, or, more strictly speaking, delegation of authority by the King to His appointed ministers in His kingdom. It is the solemn confirmation to them, as a perpetual corporation, of the promise before made to them, and now made over to them officially, and by a significant efficient act, no other than breathing on them, and saying, "Receive

ye the Holy Ghost ; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Thus did the Divine King fix, in conversation with the Apostles whom He had chosen and trained, the great rules of His kingdom, its destined universality, its permanency, its Sacraments, its ordained ministry with spiritual "power and commandment" annexed, its discipline, its doctrine, its aggressive character, its pastoral obligations.

There remains one other branch of inquiry, a valuable, and indeed indispensable, guide to the communications made by our Lord on "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." I mean the acts, and methods, and words of those who received them from his Divine lips—the Apostolic College. The extended examination of these must needs be deferred to a future occasion, if the Lord will.

In all that I have brought before you, my brethren, to-day, I have kept as much as possible to words of Holy Scripture, and purposely refrained from introducing lengthened comments upon them. And now, in conclusion, my words must be few; and addressing you, as supporters of the Foreign Missions of the Church, I wish to leave upon your minds, with all the emphasis I can command, one line of thought and action in regard to them.

Let me borrow here some words spoken by an eminent living bishop of our Church, in a sermon on a public occasion.[1] "In the New Testament the kingdom of heaven is already in existence, and

[1] I had the privilege of hearing that remarkable sermon, preached by the present Archbishop, when Bishop of London, on the day of the Consecration of Truro Cathedral. For the extract given above, I am indebted to Canon Scott Holland's *City of God*, p. 20.

men are invited into it. The Church takes its origin not in the will of man, but in the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everywhere men are called in; they do not come in, and make the Church by coming. In the New Testament His ministers are sent forth to gather the children of men within the fold [the kingdom of heaven], and are not simply selected by the members of the Church to help them in their spiritual life."

What now is the practical conclusion to be drawn from these words but this? That whilst it is a blessed work to convert a sinner from the error of his ways, or to seek after even one lost sheep until it is found, you should aim to gain an added blessing, even a blessing which gathers into itself all others of individual concern. So then, in all you attempt for the salvation of others, learn to enlarge your thoughts and aims, so as to take in a broad view of the grand purpose of the Mission of Jesus Christ into the world: the purpose which He announced in His earliest words; which was constantly on His lips during His life; which He pressed upon His chosen disciples as the end of their ministry; which He dwelt upon in such fulness during the forty days; which He enjoined upon all His followers to make the subject of their continual prayer, in the words, "Thy kingdom come." Then will you indeed earn for yourselves that glorious title of "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God." Your Divine King, meanwhile, is "expecting, till His enemies be made His footstool," when—we have His royal word for it—"all people, nations, and languages shall serve Him," and "the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

V

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, April 28, 1895.

"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."—ST. MARK xvi. 20.

BEFORE I proceed to illustrate this verse—so comprehensive in its brevity—from the acts and words of the Apostles, it is necessary to connect it with a clause in the verse preceding. It was "after the Lord had spoken unto them" that His Apostles "went forth." And this in turn requires us to call to mind that the sum and substance of what the Lord spoke to them were "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." In a Mission sermon upon these words last year we found much light thrown upon their meaning by Scriptures of the Old Testament, and more especially by the preaching, the acts, the parables, the discourses of our blessed Lord Himself. We gathered as our conclusion, that the Church of the New Testament was to be the visible manifestation, or embodiment, of the "kingdom of God" upon earth. There remained to be considered, being deferred to this occasion, one other branch of inquiry, a valuable and indeed indispensable guide to the communications made by our Lord on "the things pertaining

to the kingdom of God"—I mean the acts, words, and methods of those who received them from His Divine lips.

We note, then, with interest, that their first act was one of simple, literal obedience to His command. They returned in a body to Jerusalem. And how should they employ their days there otherwise than He had done before He made choice of themselves for His disciples, *i. e.* in earnest prayer to God? And so they went (as we might say) into retreat. For they, too, in turn were now about to fill up the vacancy in their body caused by the fall of Judas Iscariot. This necessary act was, we cannot doubt, prescribed to them by their Master, but was left to their own execution during this solemn interval, partly, we may believe, that the new ministry might be seen to bear fruit after its kind for perpetual succession in after ages, and partly that the newly adopted member of the body might receive equally with the rest the miraculous confirmation of the Holy Ghost in his apostolic office. And yet the eleven would not venture to choose for themselves, but asked the Lord, who had chosen *them*, to choose *this one* also, that he too might be a witness, as He had appointed them by His own commission to be "witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth." The adoption of the word *witness* by St. Peter from his Lord's parting discourse[1] is an illustration of that clause in our text which I would wish to be borne perpetually in mind, and printed, as it were, in capital letters, at the end of each page of the history, "the Lord working with them."

For now, according to His most true promise,

[1] Cf. also St. John xv. 27, with Acts i. 21, 22.

He sent down upon them the Holy Ghost from heaven. How inconceivably wonderful must have been the power signified, when the very outward signs of it were enough to startle and confound the multitude who saw and heard them! "It was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes" even to read of it. But mark its meaning and effect. Hitherto in the Lord Jesus Himself was contained the apostolate, the episcopate, the presbyterate, the diaconate, of the Church of the New Testament. Now the first development took place, the delegation of the apostolate to the chosen twelve, who were "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire," to become the first ordained Missionaries, as the one hundred and twenty, upon whom doubtless the Holy Spirit was poured, became the first body and laity of the Church.

And now, my brethren, I am going to invite you to look carefully and see how these apostolic missionaries set about the work assigned them, and for which they had just received full credentials. "That great city, the holy Jerusalem, was now descending out of heaven from God." "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb." Yes, but "the same Stone which the builders refused, the same was now become the Head of the corner." It was "in Him that the building fitly framed together grew unto a holy temple in the Lord."

In other words, the teaching and redeeming work of Jesus Christ regulated the teaching and ministerial work of His twelve Apostles. It is this remarkable correspondence between the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospels that I propose to illustrate to-day. The Lord had chosen His

Apostles at first "through the Holy Ghost." He had given them commandments from time to time in prospective regard to their future ministry, especially during the great forty days. He took them through a detailed course of interpretation of the whole of the Old Testament, in its three-fold division, as throughout pointing to Himself; and in particular to His sufferings, His death, His resurrection on the third day. He had bidden them to "preach repentance and remission of sins in His Name, beginning at Jerusalem," and thence going forth to "all nations." He had bidden them follow up their preaching by administration of holy baptism. He had given them assurance, in the most unqualified terms, of His Divine power and of His perpetual presence. And they were now to be "witnesses of these things." "And," says St. Luke with emphasis, "they remembered His words": remembered them in the best way by keeping close to them in all they said and all they did.

Let me now proceed to give some proofs of this close correspondence from the history. The first act of the apostolic body after the ascension of the Lord was, as we have noticed, one of punctual obedience, and was followed by the fulfilment of the promise. The first opening of the mouth on the day of Pentecost by Peter with his eleven brethren, under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, was the Messianic interpretation of a celebrated passage in the Book of the prophet Joel. And this was followed by an interpretation in like sense of two of the Psalms of David, in which he bore witness to the death, the resurrection, the ascension, the session of the Son of God at His Father's right hand, with strong call to

repentance for the unparalleled crime of which they had been guilty, and yet with promise of remission of sins in His Name, to be sealed to them by accepting His holy baptism. "It is this Jesus," he said, "whom God hath raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." It is He that "hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." This, the first Missionary address, was delivered while as yet the tongues as of fire rested visibly on the heads of the speakers. And consider, with wonder and gratitude at the overruling providence of God, what a magnificent audience was gathered together to hear it: "devout men out of every nation under heaven," representing the twelve tribes of the dispersion, in Asia, Europe, Africa, now present, would shortly return to their distant homes, and some, we doubt not, would bear the glad tidings far and wide, and prepare the way for the extension of the Mission Field among all nations. But however this was to be, we know that the result of the preaching, the after conversations, and the baptisms, was the establishment of a Christian community, presenting in its characteristics the nearest resemblance to Paradise regained which the world has ever known.

But to return to the Apostles and their special work. From the very first they had, like their Master, animated it by prayer; and their attendance at the daily Temple service was the occasion, not only of "the Lord working," but of His "confirming the word with signs following." So it had been at Pentecost. So it was, notably, in the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the Temple. Peter and John were poor men. They had not enriched themselves by the voluntary offerings of their converts. Neither had they in-

herent power to work this miracle. It was "in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" that they bade the lame man to walk. And so, in the discourse that Peter delivered to the astonished multitude, he argued on the same lines as he had done on the day of Pentecost, following his Lord's commands, in the Messianic interpretation of the Old Testament, in the clear statement of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, in the practical application of them, as his witness to Christ, in the offer to his hearers, "beginning at Jerusalem," of the blessings of the Gospel. The treatment they received at the hands of the Sadducean priests and rulers was exactly what their Master had prepared them to expect. "These things," He said, "have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them." And now, when they were suddenly summoned, and placed in the midst of their accusers, they were to experience the truth of their beloved Master's promise: "The Comforter, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And, for their urgent need, "When they shall deliver you up, it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." And so, on this critical occasion, the first of its kind in his experience, Peter was "filled with the Holy Ghost," and used the same methods and topics of discourse that he had done before, to the perplexity of the unbelieving council, because the speaker, however bold, was evidently an unlettered man according to their notions. But he in turn, for himself and his brethren, threw himself upon his Lord's life,

death, resurrection, teaching, and commands. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

It is interesting and important to observe that the same topics and methods which marked the Apostles' preaching, marked their joint prayers also, *i. e.* the Messianic interpretation of the Old Testament, "the Lord still working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." And the answer came in a fresh outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and in boldness and great power to give witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It was the same answer they announced to the council at their summons a second time. In effect it was, "We must obey God. Ye slew the Lord Jesus. God has raised Him from the dead, and placed Him at His right hand, to give repentance and remission of sins. Of these things we are the appointed witnesses." And so in the face of persecution, and in peril of their lives, "they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Up to this time the twelve Apostles had discharged the duties of the future presbyterate and diaconate; but the believers had now grown into so vast a multitude, and the daily ministration of alms had become such a disproportionate call upon their thoughts and time, that it was clearly necessary to part with some of their manifold functions. And the action they took was, to say the least, the germ of the "Order of deacons," which has been a characteristic of the Church in all subsequent ages. In takiug this step, which was marked by prayer and imposition of hands, they must have felt the comfortable assurance of their Divine Master's approval, for their object in it was to "give themselves continually to prayer, and to the minis-

try of the Word." The result was a further and striking encouragement to them, not only in the marvellous increase in the number of the disciples, but in the after history of two out of the seven new deacons, Stephen the first martyr, and Philip the first evangelist of Samaria. It was the persecution of the Church that was overruled to the spread of the Gospel. Every one became a Missionary, carrying with him the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, and Philip took Samaria as his special Mission station. Into the door thus providentially opened, Peter and John, as the chosen representatives of the apostolic body, speedily entered, and thus fulfilled the Lord's command, that, after Jerusalem and Judæa, Samaria should be the scene of their labours, testimony, and preaching.

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Peter and his brethren had been charged by their Divine Master to preach in His Name repentance and remission of sins among all nations, and to baptize all nations. As yet this development of their office had not dawned upon the mind of any of them. The choice among them, that the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and believe, fell upon Peter. A special revelation was needed, was given, and was obeyed. It is, on the present occasion, only with the Missionary address delivered by Peter to Cornelius and his company that we are concerned. It is the last of its kind recorded in the narrative of the Acts. Of course there were special topics in it which the occasion called forth, particularly the new light poured on his own mind, that it was not to Jews only, but to all nations that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached. But forthwith, according to his uniform method, he made

his address historical, upon the life, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus, of which he professed himself and his apostolic brethren to be the accredited witnesses, adding now for the first time the final article of the faith about Jesus Christ, not of his own mind, but because "the Lord commanded them to preach and to testify that it was He who was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead."

My brethren, in what I have brought before you to-day, my chief object has been to draw your attention to the character of the several recorded addresses of the Apostle Peter. You see they do not profess any original views of his own: they are the delivery of a message; and that without much variation, expressed in simple terms, whether of fact or exhortation, with no pretence of oratorical display. What was there in them to produce the marvellous effects that followed their utterance? What but that in them he was preaching, not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord—that he kept close to the instructions, and the language of the instructions, he had received from his Divine Master, "the Lord working with him"? What but that behind his simple words lay the energy of the Divine Spirit, Who drove them with irresistible force to the consciences of his hearers?

But study for yourselves, I pray you, the earliest chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, if you would learn how the foundations of "the kingdom of God" on earth were laid. And let me put briefly before you by way, I hope, of guidance, what were the chief factors in the grand success which the apostolic Missionaries achieved.

In the first place, what St. Peter taught was taught by all his eleven brethren. They all spoke

the same thing. Their witness agreed perfectly together. Its effect was therefore twelvefold. There was not the least assumption of superiority on the part of St. Peter, as you may plainly see from the eleventh chapter. And the boldness with which they delivered their message still further impressed all that heard them. Then their lives corresponded with, and confirmed, their teaching; for all could see how devoted a body of men they were, how void of self-assertion and of self-seeking. They had but one object in view, the discharge of their high commission. They were men of prayer, as we read several times, not only at the public hours of prayer in the Temple, but more privately with their own company. What a graphic picture of their life is presented to us in that one description, "Every day in the Temple, and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." And in the execution of that office, and their personal experience, they bore the genuine stamp of their Master's appointment; they were seized, put into the common prison, summoned before the council, beaten with stripes; and in all this they "rejoiced," because they were "counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name." He had Himself predicted this to them as an essential guarantee of the reality and success of their Mission. It is true also that, as "the Lord was working with them," so He "confirmed the word with signs following." This, too, was in accordance with what was promised them by the Lord, that they should do greater works than He Himself had done. These were not only seals to their asserted claims, even to their enemies, who "could say nothing against" them, but to their own people they served as evident marks of distinction of the apostolic body from

all others; for "of the rest durst no man join himself to them," indeed "the people magnified them." All this, it is evident, contributed largely to the success of their work. "The signs following" illustrated also the awful power that was lodged in them, as Apostles of "binding," as well as of "loosing," by the instances of Ananias and Sapphira, and of Simon the sorcerer. They had learnt beforehand that "the kingdom of Heaven was like unto a net that gathered of every kind"; "like unto a field in which, after it was sown with good seed, the enemy came and sowed tares." It was therefore no disappointment to them; and their judicial treatment of these cases served to create a wholesome fear throughout the Church at large, and must be counted amongst the causes which gave strength to the whole body.

Its real and abiding strength, however, consisted in the characteristics of the converts in general, which were the glory of the apostolic Mission: their strict continuance in the doctrine into which they had been baptized; their steadfast adherence and loyalty to their ordained teachers; their regular attendance day by day at the Temple services; the daily Eucharist in the house; their gladness and singleness of heart; and a community of goods, voluntary indeed, but perfect in its working, so that there was "none among them that lacked"—a most evident proof "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul." Can we wonder at the mighty effects which such a body of Churchmen, increasing daily in number, had upon all who witnessed the unparalleled spectacle? That they should be "had in favour with all the people"? That their enemies were driven to confer among themselves, and were content with

a fruitless warning and repressive measures? That the captain and officers sent to take the Apostles should have "brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned"? It was abundantly evident that the new Mission in this its earliest stage had struck deep roots, and brought forth much fruit.

All this is more conspicuously shown in the notices we have of distinguished converts. Barnabas first gave up his landed property, and then gave up himself for the propagation of the Gospel, attaining afterwards to the dignity of an Apostle, and everywhere known for his amiability under the title of "the son of consolation." Stephen, "full of faith and power and wisdom," in his brief ministry must be credited, as seems to be the meaning of the sacred historian, with the conversion to the Christian faith of a great multitude of the priests of the Jewish Church, and as well as a remarkable increase of other converts. He was more outspoken than any of the Apostles themselves. His arguments were irresistible; but his vehement invective hastened the end, for which he was doubtless prepared, and made him the first Christian martyr. His dying prayer did more for the spread of the Gospel than all the controversies of his life, for it gained the conversion of one who was afterwards the greatest human Missionary the Church has ever known. The death of Stephen was the signal for a general persecution; and persecution, as often in subsequent times, was over-ruled to the extension of the Church. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the Word," not indeed in an official capacity, but as evangelizers. They went to districts where as yet no Apostle's foot had trod. In particular, Philip,

one of the seven, penetrated to Samaria, and was the first to plant the Gospel there. It is specially to be noticed that his methods were identical with those of the Apostles, as theirs were the echo of their Master's instructions, for he "preached the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ," and men and women "were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus." The occasion, we see, was one to illustrate the "divers orders in the Church," for the work of Philip was supplemented by the work of the Apostles Peter and John. Another step was now taken under the Holy Spirit's direction in developing the catholicity of the Church, in the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, a devout proselyte. Philip had the honour of being the chosen instrument of his conversion and his baptism, as he was also the pioneer of the Gospel in all the cities of the south-western coast of Judæa.

The missionary zeal of Philip gained for him in the Church the honourable title of "Philip the Evangelist." Still more ardent was the zeal of those early converts, whose names doubtless have a bright record in the book of life, who travelled into the regions beyond, as far as Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Yet even these were surpassed by the bold venture of some of their body—and they, too, observe, *natives* of Cyprus and the African Cyrene—who preached the same Jesus, in Whom they believed, to men in those regions, who were not even proselytes to the Jews' religion.

The advance all along the line, so to speak, was too great, and fraught with results too mighty and lasting, to admit of our dwelling more on them at this time. Let it suffice, in conclusion, my brethren, to send you once more to the careful perusal of the

wonderful story as far as we have been able to touch upon it, in the inspired pages themselves. You cannot but see that the primitive Church from its first beginning was a Missionary Church, as it was intended by its Divine Founder to be. Every member of it was filled with the Missionary spirit, showing itself first in liberality to the brethren, and then bursting out, as occasion arose, further and further into other and distant lands. Let me urge you, whoever you are, in whatever profession or state of life, to study this earliest Missionary record in the spirit of faith, prayer, and obedience, till there comes over your own soul, as you ponder over its pages, something of the same Missionary spirit. No less than a revival of that spirit in *all* the members of the Church of Christ will suffice to enable it to overtake the spiritual work that lies before it in the colonies, and in the vast regions beyond. Ask yourself then, What am I giving, praying, doing, for the extension of the kingdom of God, which my Saviour King charged His Apostles to set on foot in Jerusalem? Know that if you are heartily taking your part, whatever that be, you will have, no less than the Apostles themselves, "the Lord working with you," and the assuring echo in your souls of His words to them of old, "My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not."

VI

THE MISSION GIVEN TO ST. PAUL FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (No. 1.)

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, April 19, 1896.

"He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."—ACTS ix. 15.

LAST year, in the Mission Sermon, now an annual institution in this cathedral, we were discoursing on the beginnings of the kingdom of God. We were able to carry on the wonderful story to a point of distinct and remarkable departure, recorded in Acts xi. 20: "Some of them" (*i.e.* of those who were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, native Jews) "of Cyprus, and Cyrene (in Africa), when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus"—the first instance of preaching to idolaters. This independent action went beyond that of the Apostle Peter, by whose mouth the Gentile proselyte, Cornelius, heard the Gospel, believed, and was baptized.

But now the time was come when the Lord, the King Himself, appeared visibly from heaven, in light above the brightness of the sun, to convert a zealous enemy of His growing Church into a zealous missionary and propagator of the same

with a special extraordinary commission to preach His Name, to plant His Church, to enlarge His kingdom, in regions far distant, among the Gentiles. And our subject to-day (and on some future occasions, if God permit) is to describe the part assigned to this favoured Apostle in extending the Kingdom of God on earth.

The first introduction of his name in the history is simple enough: "A young man, whose name was Saul." "One called Saul of Tarsus." But his was a personality of tremendous force. His antagonism to the Church and all its members went far beyond that of their other persecutors, in its fierceness, thoroughness, heartless cruelty, and self-sacrificing zeal and frenzy; for it was all in the name of religion, undertaken in strict compliance with his religious conscience, which bade him do his very utmost to extirpate (what he deemed) this new superstition. That he "was consenting to the death of Stephen" falls far short of the meaning of the Greek word. He gave it his heartiest sympathy and approval. And it whetted his fury against all who believed with Stephen. Nor was the persecution and dispersion of the Church, which began the same day, enough for him. He "made havock" of the Church—a term properly applicable to the ravages of wild beasts—he forced his way into private houses—seized upon men, and women too—shut them up in prison—secured the death of many—all this, where the devout funeral of Stephen was going on. His life at this time was described by himself at a later period thus: "I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, being exceedingly mad against them." And then, having tasted blood, he would have more. Being now, as

is supposed, about thirty-five years of age—oh! the ruthlessness of the man—he volunteered to the high priest to lead a band of persecutors, for a six days' journey, with authority of letters to the synagogues, of which there might be thirty or forty, in Damascus, that he might bind all, whether men or women, that called on the Name of Jesus, and hurry them to Jerusalem the sooner to make an end of them.

And now, brethren, why have I reproduced out of the Bible narrative these harrowing details? Surely it is to magnify the grace and power of the Lord Jesus, Who could, and Who would, create the most effectual minister of His spiritual kingdom out of the most inveterate of its foes. Among the things which the Psalmist had spoken before concerning the King was this, that His "arrows should be sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people should fall under Him." Surely "the wrath of man shall praise Him; the remainder of wrath shall He restrain."

In the mad career of Saul, there was a Watcher above, whose sovereign power and sovereign grace united in saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." It was noon; and such a noon as is known only in an Eastern climate. But that noonday sun was out-shone by a sudden and strange light from heaven. It was light streaming from the glorious Body of Jesus Christ. The effect was instantaneous and astonishing, and the relation of it in the few brief sentences of the narrative holds us in breathless attention. Saul, the leader and planner of the whole journey, was smitten to the ground, and heard distinctly a voice speaking to him in the Hebrew tongue. It called him by his name twice; and brought his conduct at once to a

personal issue. "Why persecutest *thou Me?*" That word *Me* sharpened the pricks of conscience against which he had been madly kicking, and called up intense anxiety in his soul, which was now as prostrate as his blinded body. "Who art Thou, Lord?" For he had hitherto thought in his ignorance that he was doing the Lord's work. The moment had come for the revelation of the saving Name to do its work of effectual conviction and melting love. "I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest." This was enough. The announcement carried in these brief terms the sum of all. The conviction smote his innermost heart; the power and the will alike for further resistance collapsed, and he avowed himself ready to do the bidding of his newly-found Master, whatever it might be.

Every recorded detail of this critical time is full of interest, but to-day we must single out that one of prime importance in its direct bearing on the subject of this discourse—I mean the special commission delivered by the Divine King to His new servant, "made willing in the day of His power." "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and the inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." These great words were burnt into the very soul of the new convert from thenceforward, as in his body also he bore the marks of the Lord Jesus. There still remained in him his old fire, and determination,

and thoroughness, and self-sacrificing zeal; but all were now transfigured, and wholly spent in the service and for the furtherance of the kingdom of his beloved and only Lord and King, Jesus Christ.

The Collect for the Festival of the Conversion of St. Paul has this unique introduction, that "by the preaching of this blessed Apostle," following upon that wonderful event, "God has caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world." And truly so; for while other Apostles were labouring faithfully for the same end, we know not where, the converted Paul laboured more abundantly than they all. The chief following chapters of the Acts of the Apostles are taken up with copious reports of his Missionary journeys, speeches, and sermons; and the greater part of the apostolic Epistles, written by him, let us wonderfully into his inner life, motives, fears, and hopes. "Do you see," says St. Chrysostom, "how his soul reached over the whole world? His heart a man would not do wrong to call the heart of the world."

With this theme before us, touching as it does on all sides so many collateral points of interesting inquiry, it is essential for our present purpose that I should ask you, my brethren, to forego the consideration of these, in order that we may survey the career of the great Apostle in that one light, which he himself deemed of paramount importance, as the fulfilment of the commission entrusted to him; "showing first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance;" "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ."

It is eminently characteristic of the man, that after he was restored to sight and to bodily vigour, he "straightway preached Christ (or rather, as the better reading, Jesus), in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." Without any interval, he stood up boldly in those very synagogues, to which, but a week before, he had been the eager bearer of letters against every one that bore the hated Christian name. There he proclaimed to the unbelieving Jews the central truth, which hitherto had raised his fiercest opposition, that Jesus is the Son of God. We gather that the first preaching of the converted Saul was not a relation of his spiritual experience, neither was it antagonistic or denunciatory, but it was positive and dogmatic, consisting of enunciation and proof. It raised at once universal astonishment, for all at Damascus knew the preacher by reputation, and knew what special errand had brought him. All their wonder turned upon THE NAME—the Name of Jesus; as indeed did all the controversy, and all the mystery. Saul had now taken his public stand as a preacher of the Divinity and Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.

This was the first stage of Saul's converted life, and probably a very brief one. The next is one which we know only from his own writings, his retirement into Arabia, doubtless by Divine intimation, and, as we may well conclude, for fuller Divine teaching in that retreat, and fuller preparation for his Mission work, by independent revelation. It was in the course of the third year; probably, that he returned to Damascus. The result of his retirement appears in the narrative, that he had "increased the more in strength"; so that in set disputations, carried on by him with

patience and meekness, fortified by the Old Testament Scriptures, he proved the cardinal doctrine of the true Messiahship of Jesus, so that the Jews had nothing to say against it. His confessorship for the Gospel's sake had now fairly set in. The Jews, exasperated at the turning round against them of such a champion, took counsel, without venturing upon any trial, to kill him. This plot of theirs was discovered by Saul. And then, lest he should escape out of the city, they set a constant guard by day and night at the gates to catch and kill him. They were bold in their measure, for they had on their side the governor of the city, whose policy it was to court the favour of the Jews. Providentially, though not miraculously, for it was by natural means, their evil designs were frustrated; the disciples, who had come to know his value, let him down by night, lowering him in a basket through the window of a house built on the city wall. Thus, according to the promise made him by Jesus Himself, he was "delivered from the people."

He went direct to Jerusalem, for the purpose, as he himself tells us, of visiting Peter; though not to receive any instruction in the Gospel scheme, or any commission or authority at the hands of that great Apostle. Already he had received these from the Divine Head of the Church. He had larger views of the kingdom of God than even Peter himself had as yet attained to. The first scene, however, was a painful one to him. He endeavoured to attach himself to the disciples; but one and all were afraid of him, and would not believe that he was a disciple at all. No wonder, for they only remembered him as the prime, violent mover of the persecution which had broken up

their company, and they had no news from Damascus, and none of course from Arabia. Their natural suspicions were removed by the good office of Barnabas, the son of consolation. Intercourse on the freest footing was now established. But that was not enough for the zeal of the new convert. He must bear public testimony at once, doing the same at Jerusalem as he had done at Damascus. "He spake boldly in the Name of the Lord Jesus." More particularly, he sought out his old synagogue, and in the very place where he had disputed *against* the new faith, he boldly made his retractation, and disputed *for* it against his Greek-speaking countrymen. They sought a more expeditious way of closing the controversy than by argument. They would get rid of him by violent means. They would kill him. His courageous spirit would have risen, even thus early, to meet a martyr's death, if so be he might deliver his testimony. Even a Divine vision and warning were not enough to quench this desire. He thought his case was so strong that the Jews *must* be convinced by it. He expostulated with the Lord on this very ground, as if he felt a woe would come upon him, if he did not preach Christ in the place and among the people where he had formerly opposed His religion. But God would not suffer it. He had other and more extensive work for His servant to do, and he must not be sacrificed to the malice of the Jews. "Depart," was the order, "for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." The brethren were the willing instruments of this removal; and they got him conveyed to Cæsarea on the sea-coast, and thence by ship to his own native Tarsus. There he remained, doubtless doing his Master's work, till another call of Providence

awaited him, which proved to be the step that led to the fixing of his future vocation, and the fulfilment to him of the special call, first at his conversion, and afterwards at Jerusalem.

How it came about we must now relate, for it shows a most important advance in the Missions of the Church in foreign parts. It has been already noticed, that some zealous volunteers in Missionary work had gone, to use the historian's emphatic words, "as far as Antioch." This bold venture, for Antioch was the third city in the Roman empire, was blest with manifest and manifold success. The news reached Jerusalem, and gladdened the hearts of the disciples there. They must of course depute some one to ascertain the character of the work, and to give it further impulse and confirmation. With great propriety this special mission was entrusted to Barnabas, himself a native of Cyprus, and known to the preachers, and, like them, a Greek-speaking Jew, as well as of a winning disposition: "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." His simple and generous heart at once recognized and rejoiced in the genuineness of the work that had been done. And he fulfilled that part so appropriate in a superior minister on his visitation, exhorting all to carry on their conversion with persevering consistency, in the ways of the Lord. The work grew daily on his hands, and foreshadowed a still larger work in the future. He must have help, and such a helper as would combine zeal with more strength and courage of character than perhaps he himself possessed. To whom should he apply but to that brother whose society he had had fifteen days' enjoyment of in Jerusalem, whose paramount qualifications had then been so signally proved?

He departed accordingly to Tarsus, to seek Saul. And when he had found him—the seeking and finding seem to imply activity on Saul's part at the time—he persuaded him, though needing no persuasion, to join him.

The employment that awaited Saul was just such as to draw out his special powers. The many synagogues of the Jews at Antioch were in the midst of a large Gentile population. The work went on continuously and prosperously, with greater settlement in it than has lately been noticed in the history. These two great teachers spent a whole year with their newly-formed congregations, assembling together in church (so the original has it) as might be the case in our own time, and teaching by regular and systematic course the considerable number of people who avowedly belonged to them. We read of no opposition, except the contemptible one of fastening a name of reproach on the growing society, for so it seems we ought to interpret the remark, that it happened that in Antioch, first of all, the disciples got the name of Christians, first in mockery, but afterward a name to be had in everlasting honour. In this we have an incidental proof of the number and importance of the converts, and of the strenuousness and success of the Missionaries. The Church seems to have been more fully organized here than elsewhere, so that Antioch may fairly be called the mother church of Gentile Christendom.

But the work still outgrew the capabilities of meeting it. Jerusalem was the great seed-plot of Missionaries; and so by the overruling Providence of God, as we must regard it, certain prophets came down at this time to Antioch, who would

give seasonable strength to the new Mission. At all events, their arrival served to supply a beautiful and convincing illustration of the genuineness of the profession of the Antiochene Christians. The startling announcement was made by one of them, in his prophetical character, that there would, ere long, be a trying and very extensive famine, pressing with peculiar severity upon Judæa. The disciples at Antioch united to a man in the discharge of the duty of sympathy and charity, and determined to give, each one of them, an offering as he was able, to their poor brethren in Judæa. So honourable and important was the office of carrying the money, that it was entrusted to none others than the leaders of the Mission, who gave it to the elders, now first mentioned as a class, of the several congregations in Judæa.

Barnabas and Saul had other objects to attain, probably, in paying this visit to the mother church. At all events, John Mark, whom Peter calls his son, was, perhaps by his recommendation, taken on by them to strengthen still further the staff of workers at Antioch. To Barnabas the arrangement was especially satisfactory, as he was his relative; and the double name he bore might also intimate the propriety of the choice, as symbolizing the advancing fusion of Jews and Gentiles in one Church.

With their return to Antioch, the labours of the Mission there were carried on with increased vigour. It was now of some years' standing. All had been going on regularly in unconscious preparation for a great epoch now close at hand. The church at Antioch had assumed a settled permanent character. It is called the church that was in being at

Antioch. Names we have not met with before are now enumerated among the prophets and teachers, the former to preach, the latter to expound the Scriptures. Barnabas and Saul alone have been mentioned hitherto; but now others are mingled with them, nay, placed between them on the list, in order as it seems to mark the divinely-ordered separation that was about to be made the more emphatically. Simeon, being called Niger, would seem to have been a native of Africa, and Lucius was certainly so; both may have been among the original Missionaries eleven years before, as men of Cyrene. Of the other three, Barnabas was from the island of Cyprus, Saul from an important city on the continent of Asia Minor, and Manaen, foster-brother of Herod Antipas, a convert therefore from the higher ranks, from Judæa. The united efforts of such men as these, with their marked individual characteristics and various powers, must have accomplished a great work at Antioch. Barnabas, we see, was the head of the Mission, while Saul's name is put last, like "little Benjamin," the youngest of his brethren, of whose tribe indeed he was.

All these teachers were together a Missionary brotherhood, fulfilling their public ministry according to the order of their course, in preaching the Word, in breaking of bread, and in offering up joint prayers to the Lord. And there was a strictness about their ministrations, and a self-severity, which was an effectual aid to their efficiency. They joined fasting with their services, apparently as an ordinary condition of their performance, and doubtless under Divine sanction. The entire dedication of themselves, bodies, souls, time, and energies, to the spiritual work, was their established

character. And what was the honour and reward in store for such as these, now about to be given by express word of the Holy Ghost? It was that some out of their number were to be selected for still more arduous and self-denying labour. They were to have the distinction of supplying the first directly-ordained Missionaries to the heathen. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me—observe the source of authority and power—Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." How the intimation was given we are not told; but there is a particle (δή) in the Greek which our A.V. and R.V. do not recognize, implying that the thing was to be done at once. The inward call of the Holy Ghost had gone before both to Barnabas and Saul; now the separation, or outward call, was to be made, by which the whole Church should know, by visible action, that they were appointed to this new and special work by God Himself. The Divine monitor was at once obeyed. A special service of prayer was held. As before, the spirit of prayer was quickened and intensified by fasting. The solemn event of the day was, not a mere blessing, but the ordination, or consecration of Barnabas and Saul—two together, after the Lord's precedent—to a higher office in the Church, that of Apostles, with visible Mission committed to them. The outward sign of this consecration was the laying-on of hands by the ministers present. The Holy Ghost Himself was the Consecrator; while the brethren in the ministry laid their hands, in solemn awe of the unseen God, yet in firm faith and obedience, upon the two men that had been divinely chosen. Everything in the foundation, and in the successive stages of the building-up, of

the city and kingdom of God, was started, so to speak, by some manifest, undoubted, interposition of the Holy Ghost; and yet the outward ordinance was not dispensed with. "They fasted, prayed, and laid their hands on them." To Saul this was the regular Mission to the Gentiles, which had been assigned to him as his future vocation at his conversion by the Lord, Who had indeed "separated" him for it "from his mother's womb." And so, after this valedictory service, the simple faith and devotion of the church at Antioch is marked by the single word, "They let them depart." There was no delay; no loitering, or prolonged leave-taking; no careful provision of outfit. "Being sent out by the Holy Ghost"—full of the Holy Ghost—"they departed," followed of course by the prayers and aspirations of those they left behind.

Here, then, I break off the story for the present.

Your duty of to-day, my brethren, is to show forth your thankfulness unto God for the conversion of His Apostle St. Paul, by following the holy doctrine which he taught. The Christianity which St. Paul taught was of course primitive Christianity; and observe, that *primitive* Christianity was *Missionary* Christianity. You may not keep your spiritual privileges to yourselves: remember the Apostle's "straightway he preached"; catch the spirit of his Missionary zeal; and make "straightway" your motto in extending your own inherited privileges to all who as yet have them not.

VII

THE MISSION GIVEN TO ST. PAUL FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (No. 2.)

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, May 2, 1897.

"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." —Acts xiii. 4.

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles has been called the Gospel of the Holy Ghost. And rightly so; for the Divine agency of the Holy Ghost is often expressed, and always implied, in the selection and consecration of the apostolic Missionaries, and in the direction of their respective Missions. Notably was this the case with the Apostle Paul. Set apart, together with his friend Barnabas, and consecrated to his new office, he was straightway sent forth by the Holy Ghost to go where the Spirit called him to go, and where the Spirit would abide upon him in the exercise of his ministry.

The choice of Cyprus as the scene of the commencement of their Missionary labours may be explained by the facts of its being the native place of Barnabas, and its having already been distinguished for its share in the propagation of Christianity; but more especially by the very large number of Jews long settled in the island. Mindful of their Lord's command, "To the Jew first," they not only attended the several synagogues at Salamis,

but addressed their message to the Jewish congregations there. And the mention of "John as their minister" in this place seems to imply that there were converts in whose baptisms he was employed.

But a more signal event marked their efforts at Paphos, the present seat of the Roman government, on the opposite side of the island. We watch for the first time the contact of the Gospel with the mind of a candid and educated heathen occupying high social position. Sergius Paulus, the pro-consul of the island, was just such a one, a man of natural sound sense and good judgment; and the story of his conversion to the Christian faith is all the more striking, because of the evil influence which till then had kept him bound. Being of a philosophical turn and dissatisfied with the worn-out creed of classical antiquity, he had with him an impostor magician of Jewish descent, in conformity with a common custom in that superstitious and credulous age. But Sergius Paulus was a man of "an honest and good heart," such as our Saviour speaks of in the interpretation of His parable, ready for the reception of "the seed of the Word." His sending for the two Apostles to his court, with earnest desire to hear their Divine message, proves it. It is proved also by the wily efforts which the evil magician found it necessary to put forth in opposition to them, to prejudice the governor against the faith. The present instance was but the forerunner of many more of the like kind, which threw every possible obstacle in the way of Missionary work among the Gentiles. On this occasion, the Holy Ghost not only filled the heart of the indignant Apostle, but sharpened his words and fired his eye. With address and titles of the most awful import in the

name of the Messiah, whom the false pretender had dared to deny, the Apostle—it was Saul, you observe, already come to the front, as the more resolute of the two Missionaries—denounced upon him the terrible punishment of temporary blindness. The sentence took instantaneous effect, as was proved by the naturalness of the man's actions with his hand held out for help in the midst of the assembly. There was a place left for repentance, even for him, which, both for his own sake, and for that of the pro-consul, we may be sure it was the hope and prayer of the Apostle might be profitably used. His own blessed experience must have powerfully recurred to his mind, in which the blindness for a season of the outward sight preceded that spiritual illumination in which he now rejoiced. To the heathen governor, at least, the awful stroke upon his trusted sorcerer brought saving conviction. Astonishment seized him. The kingdom of God, which was brought near to him, was not in word only, but in power. He submitted himself to it. He became a believer, and has the honour of being the first convert, recorded in the history of the Christian Church, from the ranks of heathen idolaters.

The work of the Mission in Cyprus was over for the present, and the whole party crossed over to the mainland. They then went inland to another centre of heathen superstition, the city of Perga in the province of Pamphylia. Their intentions here seem to have been frustrated by a loss to their company, briefly related, without any clear reason given, but of uncomfortable sound. "John, their minister, departed from them, and returned to Jerusalem." We shall hear more of the evil result of this untoward defection by-and-by. Meanwhile

we may observe, in passing, that it is instructive, and in its way sustaining, to find that the occasional later experience of Missionary annals has its first example in a Mission headed by two Apostles.

They probably thought it well to quit a scene marked by such discouragement, and pushed on further into the country one hundred miles, to the Pisidian city of Antioch. They at once took advantage of their Jewish nationality, and fulfilled the religious duty of attending the Jewish synagogue service on the Jewish Sabbath, with strict regard to Jewish custom, for they sat down during the Scripture readings. It was a wise and successful preparation for the opening of their Missionary work. For the rulers of the synagogue courteously invited them to preach the usual expository sermon. It is thought, and with reason, that the appointed lessons in the Jewish Liturgy that day were made by the Apostle the basis of his discourse. His Divine Master set that example in the synagogue at Nazareth. The sermon, we observe, was Paul's, who was clearly the recognized leader, and eager to exercise his appointed mission. And, as coming from him, it is deeply interesting to study it, whether as reflecting in its method the dying speech of Stephen, or anticipating in its argument his great Epistle to the Romans.

Standing up in strict conformity with the custom of the synagogue, and, as was usual with him, having made a motion with his hand to preserve silence and gain attention, he then began. He first chose for his audience the title in which they were with reason wont to glory most, that of "Israelites," the depositories of the Divine promises, and for others present, proselytes to the Jewish

faith, the title of "God-fearers," in order to commend his words to their favourable and serious attention. Like Stephen, he adopted the historical method as being at once simple and conclusive. The promises of which they were the inheritors dated back, he said, to the very beginning of their national life, and had been renewed in successive ages to their ancestors. Jesus, the Saviour, of Whom the prophets had written, and of Whom John was the forerunner, in due time appeared. Strange to say, as God had fulfilled His part, they also fulfilled theirs, and by their own wicked actions unconsciously set the seal to the truth of God's Word. The rest was God's own doing. He raised up His Son Jesus, Who appeared after His resurrection to men who went up with Him to Jerusalem, where they proclaimed Him and His salvation. This word made the preacher at once address himself to arouse the personal interest of his hearers, as they had a rightful claim to this wonderful dispensation. "To you," says he, "is the word of this salvation sent. Though children of the dispersion, you are still children of the promise. The resurrection of Jesus is the fulfilment of that promise made once and again in the Psalms and in the Prophets. The resurrection of Jesus is the pledge that in Him you have the fulfilment of the great promise of the forgiveness of your sins. The law could never secure this. For it is given to them, and them only, that believe. Here, then, is your probation, whether ye will believe; or whether, as the prophet once said, 'ye will not believe, though a man declare it unto you.'"

The preacher had now come to an end; and his discourse had made a profound impression on his hearers. They had evidently never heard the like

before. Such a flood of light shed upon the interpretation of their Scriptures, such a harmony traced throughout their national history, such a lifting up of the veil from the mysterious working of the Divine will, through the agency of even wicked men who yet knew not what they did, such a grand result in the assurance of the highest blessings of forgiveness and acceptance with God—all this comprised in a single expository sermon—prepares us for reading, as we do in verse 42, that as the Apostles were going out of the synagogue at the end of the service, where Paul had thus spoken, they, *i. e.* the hearers, not the Gentiles—the word "Gentiles" is not in the best MSS., and is rightly excluded from the Revised Version, and indeed there were none present in the congregation—the Jews and proselytes crowded round Paul and Barnabas, and entreated that they might hear the same wonderful words again on the next Sabbath day. Many, however, could not wait so long, but followed the Apostles as soon as the assembly was dismissed.

Pause here for a moment, my brethren, to mark St. Paul's wisdom and skill as a Mission preacher. He not only gained admiration at the time, but put into his hearers a longing desire for further instruction, while in what he said he dropped some seeds, as it were, and forbore to follow out the subject to its conclusion, his plan being to interest them and engage their goodwill, while he left much unsaid. And so now, to meet their eagerness, which he had been so successful in arousing, he added further words (as Barnabas did too) confirmatory of the public discourses, exhorting them, with persuasive arguments, and that by continuous labours (for so the Greek requires us to under-

stand), to remain constant to the grace and mercy of God, now made known to them in the terms of the Gospel revelation.

That week the curiosity and interest excited had become so intense through the continuous labours of the Apostles, which were extended to all classes, that on the next Sabbath multitudes of heathen gathered together to hear the Word of God as now preached by the new Missionaries. The very sight of the vast crowd exasperated the Jews of the synagogue. All their pride and jealousy were excited; and so, when the Apostles began to address their words to the whole assembly without distinction, they retorted by angry contradictions to their arguments, and blasphemous derogation of their Mission, which was akin to the sin against the Holy Ghost.

That Divine Person was now specially present with His maligned and rejected servants, and gave them boldness to speak the solemn words which He put into their mouth. "To you," said they, "it was the Lord's will that the word of salvation should first be preached. To you, therefore, in compliance with this will, we have gladly preached it. On you, therefore, rests the awful responsibility of having rejected it. It is your own self-condemnation; you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life. We must perforce turn to the Gentiles. And this we do, not out of mere disappointment, but according to the original purpose of the Lord Himself, Whose ordained servants we are." And thus, fortified by this Divine authority, and acting under the direction of the Holy Ghost Himself, the Apostles entered the open door before them, and reached by it the understandings and the hearts of the Gentile inhabitants of the city.

These received the word of the Lord with gladness, and those of them especially, whose hearts the Lord opened, who were set in the way of eternal life, became believers by an open act of adherence to the Divine society. And thus the word of the Lord had free course, and was glorified in all that region; and thus a distinct Gentile church was founded.

The success of the Mission provoked the most bitter and bigoted persecution. The hardened Jews not only rejected with scorn the Gospel that had been preached to them, but were furious because others had accepted it. And it was no vulgar demonstration or passing irritation. The chief agents were the first men of the city, and, strange to say, also the religious female proselytes, who were of honourable rank. And they rested not in their persecuting fury till they had driven the Apostles beyond the boundaries of the city. This violent treatment, however, neither took them by surprise nor caused them to lose heart. They had received their Master's instructions how to act in such an event. "Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth to our feet, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come unto you." It was a clear case for this symbolical act now; and so they took off their sandals, and shook off the dust from them as a testimony of the Divine displeasure, before leaving the place. The disciples, the converts whom they left behind in the city, had caught the true spirit of the Apostles and of their Master, and were filled with joy in the sure prospect of suffering for His

Name's sake. At such a crisis, when their human teachers were driven away from them, the Holy Ghost remained with them, filling their hearts with gladness, communicating to them courageous faith, and supplying them, doubtless, with all needful Church ministrations.

The apostolic Missionaries moved on to another centre of Jewish population at Iconium, a distance of ninety miles. They at once found their way to the synagogue, and delivered their message. Their success was very marked; a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Gentile proselytes believed, and acted on that profession by being baptized, for in the next verse they are called "brethren." Encouraged by this success, they remained a considerable time, opening their mouth boldly in dependence upon the Lord, Who was pleased to corroborate their Mission by many signs and prodigies wrought by their hands. But none of these things exempted them from misrepresentation, bitter opposition and personal insult. And so, having considered the schemes concerted against them, and remembering the precept of their Lord, they withdrew in haste forty miles further on in a district more purely heathen.

And thus we come upon an entirely new phase in the aggressive action of the Church, its first point of contact with heathen idolatry and gross superstition. There was no synagogue to visit, no Jewish Scriptures to apply, no preparation for the Gospel. Yet the Spirit here also was their guide, and taught them how to speak to the barbarous and ignorant inhabitants of the neighbourhood. A circumstance soon occurred which served to bring the Mission to a crisis. Paul was now preaching, it appears, in some public place to a

miscellaneous audience. Amongst his hearers was a man utterly without the use of his feet from the hour of his birth. His attentive listening and expression attracted the notice of Paul, and, by his gift of discernment of spirits, he saw that there was within this man's soul strength of faith which warranted a cure of body. And then, raising his voice to a higher pitch than he had just been using, the Apostle spoke directly to the man, "Stand upright on thy feet." He sprang up at once, and continued to walk about.

What now about the effect of this on the crowd? They could account for it easily enough. It was but of a piece with the prodigies and magical surprises that formed a part of their traditionary religion. Their mythology was full of stories of gods descending from Olympus and elsewhere to the abodes of mankind, and to their own mountainous country in particular. "The gods," they said, "had now also come down to them in the likeness of men." The phenomenon was talked of, and spread about in all directions in the rude vernacular of the common people, and they soon gave it definite shape, calling Barnabas, the graver and more majestic of the two—Jupiter, the father and chief of their gods; and Paul, as being one of small and insignificant stature, yet plainly endued with remarkable power of address, Mercury or Hermes. Not content with this, the priest of Jupiter, whose temple was just outside the city, was already at the doors with oxen and garlands, wherewith to pay divine honour to the present deities. The Apostles could not mistake what was intended, and it filled them with horror. In token of it, they rent their clothes, as Jews were wont to do, when anything frightful or terrible arose.

But what were they to do or to say to stop the impious proceedings? Could any condition of things be more hopeless, or any population more profoundly sunk in ignorant superstition? Was there any chance for their Missionary functions in such a scene? Is there any sort of element out of which they could make their appeal in this gross darkness? Yes, out of their very superstition they will draw their argument. If it was ignorance, it was ignorant piety. There was evidently a strong craving for a personal manifestation of Deity and a personal intercourse with Deity. This was the one gleam of hope which encouraged the Apostles in preaching the truths of natural religion to this benighted heathen populace. And so they leapt in among them with language and style suited in character to the abrupt action, "Sirs, why do ye such things? We are men of like passions with you." This energetic and indignant repudiation of Divine character and honours prepared the way for their remarkable address. "Turn from these gods of your own making, and your own imagining, to the really living God, Who is but One, the Creator of all things in the heaven, in the earth, and in the sea—those regions where you have been all this while reckoning three chief deities to rule. Your worship of these, your own ways in short, which you have hitherto followed, have been only of His allowance, Who is really the Lord of all. It has been the same with other nations too. Yet, if you will consider it, there has been all along a manifestation of this Personal Deity, one of periodical beneficence, rainy seasons, in which heaven and earth and sea have their share, and fruitful seasons in consequence; this has been the outward manifestation of God to you. And

there has been a corresponding personal inward manifestation—you know and feel it—your bodies satisfied with food, and your hearts with gladness." This remarkable exhortation is a model of adaptation to a thoroughly ignorant set of idolaters, strictly confined within the lessons of natural religion. With this appeal the Apostles wisely contented themselves. It almost failed of its purpose; but it did just succeed. The people forbore their designs of misplaced worship.

But these fickle mountaineers—how true to human nature and experience is the story!—in the very next verse are made the easy tools of a persecuting company of Jews, whose hatred of the Apostles had brought them all the way from Iconium, and even from Antioch; and they allow their newly-named deities to be personally insulted, and Mercury in particular to be stoned, dragged out of the city, and left for dead. They were especially bitter against him who was now preaching the faith which once he destroyed, and *he* was now all but wearing the crown of martyrdom which himself had assisted in preparing for Stephen. But God had more work for His servant to do, and his savage enemies left him just too soon. But what was the cause of their spite? The Apostle had been opposing idolatry. That they hated too. But he had won converts from idolatry to Christ. That they could not bear. And these new converts were faithful and steadfast to their teacher. They came round about him to see if he was already dead, and to bury him if he were. However, he arose, and was able to walk into the city, some little distance off. "The life of Jesus" was now, in a literal sense, "made manifest in his mortal flesh." Under the good providence

of God he proceeded the next day to Derbe, where his sojourn was of a quiet kind, and his Mission very successful.

Derbe was no great distance from his native city, Tarsus. But the care of the churches had now begun to come upon him, and so he and his brother Apostle turned back again; for the churches they had founded needed supervision, and the converts they had made needed confirmation. They therefore returned over the ground they had already traversed, in order, to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. The intrepidity they showed in revisiting the spots where they had met with such persecution, and where their very lives were endangered, was the strongest recommendation of the charge and counsel they gave to their several congregations. They strengthened the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying that the way to glory lay for all through much tribulation.

But further, these newly-founded Christian communities needed church organization in the prospective departure of the Apostles. And so a body of presbyters was taken out from the converts. This is the first instance of the kind; but not the first mention absolutely of presbyters at all. There was, we know, such an order in the mother country of Judæa. The word here used to denote the selection of them is not very clear in its meaning, for indeed it is not a very common word, but its most probable sense is not *elected*, but appointed or "ordained," and the agents were the Apostles. It was they who ordained a body of elders in the early Church, with special solemn service of prayer and fasting; and then, before parting, committed the whole body of the faithful

to the Lord. The Church was then, to use different but expressive metaphors — planted, founded, organized, formed, in all that region of Asia. To the Lord, Who alone could give the increase, it was now commended in joint prayer.

The Apostles were now far on upon their return journey, and took an uneventful course southward to the plain of Pamphylia, and thence to the sea-coast, whence they sailed to the Syrian Antioch, their headquarters, and the Missionary centre of the Gentile Church. It was there they had been "recommended to the grace of God," in dependence on which they had undertaken their first Missionary journey. It ended in the fulfilment of all the work which had been given them to do. "Work fulfilled"—most sweet words, it has been said, are these. And now the Church was to be made partaker of their joy, and to hear all from their own lips. "When they were come and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

Shall we not rightly conclude that the report of these Missionary labourers both gladdened the hearts of the hearers, and was a mighty source of strength and revival to the home church of Antioch? For what a remarkable report it was! God was the Agent, and yet all was done by Him *with* them, co-operating with them, through their instrumentality (cf. St. Mark xvi. 20). They made no account of their sufferings. They had "taken pleasure in distresses for Christ's sake." And the conquests of the Gospel had surpassed anything before experienced. The Lord had "opened the door of faith"—a favourite expression of St. Paul's.

He had made an opening for the Gentiles, even idolatrous Gentiles, to believe and receive the Gospel.

The spiritual campaign had been a glorious and successful one, but withal it had been a laborious and fatiguing time; and the Missionaries needed rest and the refreshment of Christian society. With the comforting thought of that we will break off our story to-day.

VIII

THE MISSION GIVEN TO ST. PAUL FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (No. 3.)

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, April 24, 1898.

"Our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Acts xv. 25, 26.

The subject of the course of sermons, of which that of to-day is one, is the foundation and establishment of the earliest Foreign Missions of the Church by the blessed Apostle St. Paul, according to the commandment of Jesus Christ. Considering the limits of a single sermon, and that an annual one, it is clearly undesirable to spend time upon matter drawn from various sources to illustrate the narrative, and which has been collected and published within the last few years. Such is best studied, and that with great advantage, in the leisure of home reading, or in the lecture-room of an expositor. On the other hand, I deem it to be a great advantage, on recurring occasions like this, to have our attention concentrated on the inspired, and inspiring, record of St. Luke. In the Book of the Acts we have the portrait of the Apostle in his Missionary *life and labours*. The portrait of his Missionary *heart* and Missionary *principles* is to be obtained in his Epistles. That touching and

instructive portrait will call for separate examination (God willing) in some future year.

It may be remembered that we left Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, after their first Missionary journey, taking their much-needed rest, enjoying the society of their numerous converts, and, we may be sure, turning the time to mutual benefit. The "long time" which this is said to have lasted is reckoned to have been something short of two years. But it was brought to an end by an unexpected cause of disturbance, which bore bitter trial to the Apostle in many future years. Some converts from among the Pharisees at Jerusalem stealthily intruded themselves into the happy brotherhood at Antioch, teaching the necessity of the converts being circumcised before their reception into the Church, pretending they had not only the law of Moses on their side, but also apostolical sanction for it. This novel and false teaching roused at once the most vehement opposition of Paul and Barnabas, as we may judge by the strong terms in which it is described—"sharp contention and animated disputation," and no little of it. Neither side gave in. And it was settled to refer the whole of the critical question to the mother church in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas going in person, with sundry other representatives from different quarters.

Their journey lay through Phœnicia and Samaria, and was marked by the most encouraging tokens of honour and joy at the report they everywhere gave of their Missionary success. On their arrival at Jerusalem they received an official welcome from the mother church in its representative character. But there was a discordant note in the protest handed in by the Judaizing party, from whom had,

in fact, gone forth the emissaries to Antioch. It had become plainly necessary that the question should be thoroughly argued out and settled by authority. The Church accordingly met in full assembly, by representatives of its several orders. For a while there seemed to be nothing but arguments on both sides. But argument was shortly to give place to facts. God Himself had decided the question. The two apostolic Missionaries held the whole assembly in rapt and sustained attention while they related their marvellous experience among the Gentiles, with manifest signs of the Lord working with them. The impression they made was still further deepened by wise words of Apostles, the most decisive of which were those of the president of the assembly, disowning most distinctly the authority to use his name, which the Judaizers had claimed. In fact, it was he who drafted the decision, which was presently expressed in the form of a circular letter, unanimously agreed to, and communicated to the several foreign churches which were principally concerned.

It was a signal triumph of Christian liberty. And besides that, it was to the two Apostles a personal strengthening of their hands, and a commendation of them from the mother church wherever they went, in terms of the strongest affection and high honour. It ran in these words: "Our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

At the same time, for all needful precaution and security, this authoritative letter announced that its contents would be accredited and explained by certain chosen messengers sent out for that purpose. The dismissal seems to have been an act of some

solemnity; and the whole party returned straight to Antioch. At once they summoned a general meeting of all the local congregations for the formal delivery of the authorized letter into their hands. They read it with great joy for the consolation. Their Christian freedom, on which they had hitherto acted, was now confirmed by the highest authority. And they were further tranquillized and settled by the further explanations given them by the capable messengers, Judas and Silas, remaining among them as long as it was necessary.

We learn indeed from an independent source,[1] supplied us by the Apostle Paul, that the fusion of Hebrew and Gentile elements was not speedily completed, and it became necessary for him and Barnabas to continue a while longer at Antioch, giving further instructions to those who already believed, and extending the message of the Gospel to those who had not yet received it.

The crisis at Antioch being well over, the loving heart of Paul yearned upon his earlier Gentile converts, and, "as a wise master-builder," he proposed to Barnabas that they should revisit them and enquire into their welfare. Barnabas coupled the assent he gave with the condition that his kinsman John Mark should again be one of their company. Paul objected to have with them such an one as he, who fell away from them before, and shirked Missionary work. There was a natural contrast of character between the two leaders, and by this unhappy incident it was exaggerated in its manifestation to a high degree of exasperation. It may be thought likely that some culpable weakness on the part of Barnabas on a recent occasion [2] led

[1] Galatians ii.

[2] Galatians ii. 13.

to distrust of his consistency in the mind of Paul. So it was, however, that in this unhappy temper, both perhaps being to blame, they parted company with each other; Barnabas taking Mark with him, and going to his native country, Cyprus, without any record left us of his future career; and Paul taking Silas, who had, as it seems, volunteered for Missionary work, and being fortified by the special commendation of him by the Church to the blessing of God.

As we read these painful details, put on record, we may be sure, "for our learning," we are reminded of the terms in which these two holy men had not so long before introduced themselves to a rude audience—"We are men of like passions with you." It was well the altercation did not take place in the Mission field itself; and we may thankfully see how good resulted from it in there being now two pairs of Missionaries, with extension of the work of the kingdom of God in foreign parts.

Henceforth we study the share in it given to the Apostle Paul. Agreeably to his proposition, he first visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, to strengthen them in the liberty now gained for them by the Apostolical letter. He discharged the same duty in the several cities of the neighbouring territory of Pisidia, and with the same happy results. At Lystra he had had his eye upon a young convert at his former visit, who may have witnessed his being stoned on that occasion, and who he foresaw, or rather was supernaturally enlightened to foresee, would be a valuable helper in the Mission field, especially among Jews. His devotion to the cause was also borne witness to by the Christians in that neighbourhood. The first act of the Apostle, however, in taking him on, might cause surprise, did

we not look into the special circumstances of the case. For the same Paul who had consistently resisted the imposition of circumcision upon Gentile converts as obligatory or compulsory, made an exception on grounds of expediency in this case of mixed descent, which fact alone had led to the omission of the rite. In taking Timothy, therefore, and circumcising him, because of the Jews in that region, he was but acting on his avowed principle —"To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews." Probably ordination followed.

The Missionary work next taken in hand must have occupied some considerable time, for it reached over the region of Phrygia and South Galatia (by which terms the same country is meant [1]). One clause only is given to it, because the sacred historian is about to show how, through the guidance, or the restraint, of the Spirit of Jesus, under Whom they carried on their labours, the Missionaries were led to a most remarkable extension of them into Europe. Thus they were forbidden to exercise their preaching ministry in the Roman province of Asia, and then again forbidden to go northward to Bithynia, where they thought was an opening. And so, passing by Mysia, they came straight down to Troas. Little did they know what this strangely imposed silence meant, till a vision in the night—a waking vision—cleared up the mystery. It was the startling apparition of a man—some conjecture it was the guardian angel of Greece [2]—standing in front of the Apostle and uttering the urgent appeal, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." The ardent spirit of Paul at once took in its force and

[1] See Ramsay's *Church of the Roman Empire*, p. 77 *et seq.*

[2] Cf. Dan. x. 13—20.

meaning; but, with excellent judgment, he consulted his companions thereon, among whom appears, quietly introduced for the first time, the writer himself of the narrative, no other than the beloved physician St. Luke. He was evidently no new convert, for he was to take part in the preaching course; and we may perhaps judge, from hints elsewhere given,[1] that he had ministered to the Apostle in a severe illness.

The party of four lost no time after they had come to their conclusion, but set to work immediately. Two days' voyage, described by the writer in nautical terms, brought them to Neapolis, the port of Philippi, and so they soon reached the city itself. Doubtless they were under providential guidance in this. Philippi was the first city of the district, perhaps meaning the first the party came to; and it was a Roman, not a Greek, colony. This was a new experience to them, and is mentioned because of some circumstances related later on.

Being then actually in this strange country, what course did the Missionaries take? Very wisely they waited some days, surveying the new scene, forming their plan, and, above all, committing themselves to their never-failing Guide. And then, on the Sabbath day, there being no synagogue, as there were but few Jews in the place, they went down to the river-side, where they supposed was a place for prayer, in order to use any opportunity that might offer. And they did find some women come together "feeling after God, if haply they might find Him," and "find Him" one of them at least did, in the preaching of Paul. The feet of

[1] Galatians iv. 13.

Lydia had been guided to the place, her knees bent in the worship of God, her ears opened to listen to the truth, her heart opened to receive the truth, her mind opened to attend to the truth, her will surrendered to be baptized, and to have her household baptized, into the Church, "the pillar and ground of the truth," that they might "walk in truth"; her mouth opened to confess the truth, her hand opened to minister to the truth. It is worthy of notice that the first convert gained in Philippi was not an European, but an Asiatic. Thus encouraged, the Missionary party continued to frequent this oratory on the river-side.

But if the "door was open" for them, it was to be equally true that there would be "many adversaries." And this came about in a strange manner. A girl possessed with the spirit of Python—really a personal agent of the devil—threw herself in their way day after day, constantly screaming out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation"—a true testimony, like that given by evil spirits to our Blessed Lord Himself. But the Apostle, with painful grief, discerned in it the presence of an evil, blaspheming spirit, whom he forthwith addressed, and in the Almighty Name of Jesus Christ charged to come out of her. The expulsion was immediate and complete. And now began the trouble and persecution, told with graphic minuteness by St. Luke, who was present throughout.

This unhappy girl had been used as a fortune-teller by a set of men for their selfish purposes, and brought them much gain thereby. Through the miracle of mercy wrought by the Apostle, all this was brought to an end. In their rage and disappointment they laid forcible hold of Paul and

Silas, as being in their eyes the chief cause of it, and dragged them to the place of public tribunal before the prætors, with an invidious and thoroughly baseless political charge. This was backed up by a tumultuary movement of the suspicious and ill-informed populace. The prætors themselves, whether overawed or infected with the like disregard of law, tore off with their own hands the clothes of the Missionaries, and ordered them to be scourged, which, by Roman custom, was a cruel punishment, preparatory to their imprisonment for the night. The jailor, on his part, unfeelingly exceeded his instructions by adding torture to constraint, thrusting them into the foulest dungeon, and keeping the feet of the wounded men, still smarting from the many stripes, apart in the stocks.

The hour of midnight had arrived, when, wonderful to relate, that foul dungeon became a house of prayer and praise. Though smarting from their wounds, and still more from the savage treatment they had met with, Paul and Silas would not omit what, perhaps, was their wonted midnight office, prayer and hymns of praise to God. The Psalter would furnish them with many such, suitable to this critical night. They were heard by the prisoners, and listened to with admiration. Above all they were heard in heaven, and the answer came at once in the form of a mighty earthquake, shaking the foundations of the whole building, opening every door, and followed by the loosing of every prisoner's chains. It awoke the old soldier in charge, and the sight of the prison-doors being open assured him of the fate that would befall him, with prisoners escaped, at the hands of justice, and so, by a method common enough at that time, he

resolved to elude it by suicide. With perfect self-possession—marvellous to relate—Paul addressed a few assuring words to him from where he was, and restrained him from his purpose. Seized at once with religious awe, the poor man called for lights, burst into the dark and dismal den, threw himself, full of trembling, at the feet of Paul and Silas, brought them out, and with agitated concern asked them the all-important question, "What must I do to be saved?" It was a conscience-stricken question. The respectful address, "Sirs," made to those very men whom but a few hours before he had treated with such gratuitous severity, and the very terms of his question, settle it in this sense. The oft-uttered cry of the possessed damsel, doubtless widely reported, had now pierced his sin-stricken soul. And so the all-comprehending, all-sufficient answer was given at once, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" and with glad extension of the good news, "thy house" also. At the same time they, both Paul and Silas, followed on with exposition of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, including that of baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus. The new creation in the converted man was proved by its good fruits immediately. Even at that unseasonable hour of the night, he with his own hands washed away the coagulated blood from their bodies; then, together with his household, received the sacrament of baptism; then exercised much-needed hospitality towards them in his own home; and then, no wonder, had joy and peace in believing. What a complete contrast to the despair of but a few hours before!

Meanwhile, the sudden earthquake had alarmed the city; and the prætors, conscious, no doubt, of

their own illegal action, commissioned the lictors to set free "those men," as they somewhat contemptuously called them. The converted jailor, not aware of St. Paul's legal claim to exemption, addressed them with the parting salutation of a Christian friend. But now the Apostle's turn had come. He had been "shamefully entreated," to use his own words in writing to a neighbouring church some years later, but he kept his temper, and in dignified terms vindicated his rights, and denounced the double illegality of which his persecutors had been guilty. He would not retaliate by bringing them before the supreme Government; but he met their present mean proceeding with a challenge which had in it a touch of innocent irony: "Let them come themselves and fetch us out." His words were not lost upon them; they had good reason to fear the consequences of their illegal action, and showed it by expressions of regret, and by request that they would quietly leave the city before the dreaded reaction of the people had set in. They, however, took their own course, quietly and leisurely went to the house of Lydia, which was always open to them, encouraged the Christian community, and so took their departure, leaving Luke, as it appears, to carry on the good work.

Such were the beginnings—surely fraught with interest and instruction for us all—of the first Foreign Church Mission planted in the continent of Europe; a Mission which soon developed into a well-organized and flourishing church, between the well-loved members of which and their beloved Founder a strong mutual attachment was a marked characteristic.

The Missionary staff, now three in number, directed their course (or, shall we not rather say,

were directed in their course?) to a most important pioneering work in a city distant nearly one hundred miles, no other than Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia. And it is worthy of remark that St. Paul, as we shall see, concentrated his efforts, in the Missionary tours he took, on centres of population and political importance. Another of his Missionary methods, much to be noticed, was that, although by special calling he was the Apostle of the Gentiles, he would approach the Jews first, wherever there were any. With them he had common ground in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, his difference from them being in the interpretation of the prophecies of the Messiah therein—not two Messiahs, as the Jews held, one suffering, the other triumphant, but One only, Jesus Christ. At Thessalonica his discussions in the synagogue were followed by early and most remarkable success—with Jews themselves, with Gentile proselytes in considerable numbers, and with many respectable women, in a place where their sex was notoriously immoral. The admission of Gentiles stirred up the envy of a body of selfish Jews, and they managed by agitation among the idlers in the market-place to create a riot, which soon spread through the whole city, and, as its natural result, led to an assault upon the house of Jason, where it was supposed the Missionaries were. In the same spirit of tumultuary lawlessness they dragged Jason and some other Christians before the rulers (to whom is given in the Greek the strictly proper title of Politarchs), with the artful charge against the whole movement of treason against the emperor. This sounded serious, but possibly the rulers had heard of the mistake made at Philippi, and so they dismissed the accused, after taking a pledge of

them that nothing should be done to disturb the public peace.

In the same interest the Missionaries were quietly conveyed to Berœa, as a less important place, sixty miles distant. Their work there, the success of it, and the opposition to it of Jews from Thessalonica, were much the same as in that place; but the report of it bears pleasing testimony to the higher tone of character in the Berœan enquirers and converts over that of the Thessalonians.

The opposition, however, was so threatening that it became necessary for the converts at Berœa, as before at Thessalonica, to take steps "immediately" for the personal safety of the Apostle; and so, to escape the malice of the Jews, he was escorted by friends to the sea, and by the sea to Athens, a voyage of three days, Silas and Timothy, as less prominent in the Mission, being temporarily left at Berœa; but the escort was charged to send them on as speedily as possible.

And thus, for the first time, St. Paul was left alone, and his letters tell us how depressed in spirit he was. He employed his waiting time in wandering about the famous city. No record is left us by himself or by the historian of any of his impressions but one, which was that his whole spirit was sorely provoked by its being a city—and such a city—full of idols in every quarter. "Therefore"—observe the word of connection and cause—"therefore" he must at once deliver his soul, out of jealousy for the honour of his Lord, and hold conversations, first with his brethren the Jews in their synagogue, notwithstanding former ill-treatment, and then with devout proselytes, using also every chance opportunity of introducing his Mission to frequenters of the public forum. He was not long

in meeting with opponents there, in the philosophers of the several schools, who were always ready for something to dispute about. All alike set upon him; some giving him a contemptuous nickname, as "an idle prattler," others imagining him to be desirous of introducing a new divinity, the chief topics of his preaching being (as they always were) "Jesus, and the resurrection." Some again, out of curiosity, and with show of courteous words, took him away to one of the chief places of general resort, on Mars' Hill, and invited him to explain further the things he had spoken of elsewhere. To their action we owe the delivery, and to St. Luke the record, of the very model of an address, made to a body of educated heathens, who had hitherto never heard the Name of Christ.

And so he stood up boldly to speak it in their midst. Taking as a text his recent experience, and in particular the inscription, "To the Unknown God," which he had "found" (apparently in some obscure corner of the city), he expresses his opinion of the national character of his hearers by a term not disparaging, but rather conciliatory and flattering. "You are," he says, "over-religious." He therefore can assume their belief in God. But he goes on to correct their mistaken notions as to what that God is, and to illustrate His real nature and attributes. Skilfully quoting one of their own poets, he draws marked distinction between Him and the creatures He has made. They, he shows, have their relations to Him, and their duties towards Him; for they have a conscience, the candle of the Lord, within them. And conscience, if it sometimes excuses, yet sometimes accuses, echoing the voice of God calling to repentance, in the certain prospect of a general judgment to come.

So far the preacher argues from natural religion. The only tenet, or rather hint of such tenet, which he borrows from revealed religion is, that the Supreme Judge at that awful assize shall be a Man, ordained by God Himself, inaugurated and selected for that high office by the fact that He has raised Him from the dead.

Whatever attention may have been hitherto paid to the strange preacher by the audience, these last words, the resurrection of a dead man, were the signal for a general and abrupt break-up of the whole assembly. Some—the sensual Epicureans, no doubt—disbelieving the immortality of soul and body alike, pouted their lips in mockery; others, those of a more thoughtful turn in regard to the soul, put off the consideration of what would become of the body with a few words of seeming politeness ("We will hear thee again of this matter"), but with real closing-up of the whole subject, like Felix, with his "convenient season." One man only of the Areopagites who had the boldness "manfully to confess the faith of Christ crucified" and risen; one woman, and a few more, are the reckoning-up of the conversions. And "thus," as the account has it, under these discouraging circumstances, his great and wonderful speech having fallen almost flat, the Apostle "departed," no doubt very soon, from Athens, and never named the place again in any of his letters, except once in a casual reference.

And now, brethren, to make an end for to-day, let me leave with you a few thoughts of a practical nature. You have just heard how scanty and disappointing were the recorded results of the colloquies and preaching at Athens of an apostolical Missionary, sent forth as he had been by the Holy

Ghost Himself. Well, then, do not be surprised if you hear of apparent failures, as well as successes, in the Foreign Missions of the Church in our own days; still less, by reason of them, lodge a complaint, or—as some do alas!—launch contemptuous words against all Missionary operations. As you can truly adopt the language of the Collect, that "God, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle St. Paul, has caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world," so you can say in undoubting faith, "God shall bless us: and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

But remember, brethren, each one of you has his own part to take in this God-commanded, God-assisted work. No collection for it is taken on these annual occasions. But a sermon on Foreign Missions is preached in vain if it do not stir you up, individually, to pray, to work, to give, to the utmost of your power, in support of this grandest of all campaigns, the redemption from sin and Satan of the whole human race, for which the Lord Jesus Christ died, rose again, and perpetually intercedes at the right hand of God. My dear brethren, I beseech you, lay this to heart, and stir up within yourselves the Missionary spirit, followers herein of the Apostle Paul, as he was also of Jesus Christ.

IX

THE MISSION GIVEN TO ST. PAUL FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (No. 4.)

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, April 16, 1899.

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city."—ACTS xviii. 9, 10.

THIS city was Corinth—the capital of the Roman province of Achaia—a city noted for its wealth, its pleasures, and proverbially for its gross immoralities. Yet St. Paul, even after his recent disappointments at Athens, bravely faced all the prospects of an unpromising Mission to such a population. His first experience was a cheering one, alone as he still was. By a kind Providence he found out a merchant and his wife, settled for a while for business purposes in Corinth, having been banished with other Jews from Rome. His acquaintance with them served a double purpose, providing him with a temporary lodging, where he could support himself by the trade he had learnt in his youth, that of goats'-hair tent-making, and, more especially, gaining for himself the staunch, self-sacrificing love of two distinguished Christians. He was minded to be independent of the pecuniary support of a Christian community still in the future,

and herein he has left an encouraging example to Missionaries to the heathen in later ages.

Of course his Sabbath days were free, but those he used, as was his wont, by attending the synagogue service, and by endeavouring to persuade the Jews and the Greek proselytes there, "testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." And to this branch of duty he was the more constrained to devote himself, after the welcome arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia, with supplies from the churches there. But his preaching efforts were rejected with organized opposition and blasphemy against the Holy Name. This made his course clear. In solemn indignation, as the appointed and now rejected prophet of God, he shook off the dust from his raiment, and pronounced all guilt of their action to lie, not upon him, but upon themselves. He would now extend his ministry to the Gentiles. These he gathered round him in a house hard by, the use of which was given him by a devout proselyte named Justus. They could not be a large number, and yet amongst them he could reckon as converts such a distinguished man as Crispus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, whom St. Paul baptized with his own hands, as well as his family, and many others who were received by baptism into the Church.

When such marked success and encouragement were granted to his work, we may perhaps be surprised to read that a special vision of encouragement was needed by him and given to him. But we must remember that St. Paul at this time carried his life in his hand, by the perils that beset him and his ministry from the Jews. And therefore the assuring words of his Lord and Master were most opportune. And, in the strength of them, instead

of closing his work at Corinth, he continued there a year and a half. The opposition did not cease, but the protection was all-sufficient, and came through an unexpected quarter.

The malicious Jews had waited for the arrival of a new proconsul from Rome; and then, with a violent onset upon the Apostle, they brought him to the court of judgment, with a skilfully-worded accusation that "this man," as they contemptuously called him, was going about to induce people to embrace a system of worship "contrary to the law." They meant the proconsul to understand by this "the law" of the State, on which ground they expected he would pronounce condemnation. He, a man of unruffled temper, saw through this appeal to "the law," that it was their own law they really meant, and that the Name they had introduced was the Name of Christ, with which he had no official concern. And so, to their great discomfiture, no doubt, he cleared the court. But the excitement was so intense that, even before his very eyes, a scene of violence was enacted amongst the crowd upon Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue. The uncertainty of the Greek text, and the real position of Sosthenes in this matter, prevent our comment upon this strange scene, except to remark that it appears to have called forth no judicial reproof from Gallio.

To the Apostle himself the result was that for the remainder of his residence at Corinth he was left unmolested, and the time of his quiet departure was fixed by an engagement of an entirely personal nature. This is described by the historian in the briefest possible terms. "He had a vow"—plainly the vow of a Nazarite, which had bound him to let his hair grow long till the period of the vow had

expired. By the permission of the law, the ritual of which he was a faithful observer, he was allowed to have his head polled in any other place than Jerusalem, where alone the hair thus cut off was to be presented and burnt; and this preliminary step he chose to take in Cenchreæ, the port of Corinth. In the absence of direct information, it is allowable to believe that this vow was taken upon himself by the Apostle in token of gratitude for some deliverance. But, however this might be, the fact remains as a testimony to the liberal spirit he invariably manifested. The goal of his intended voyage was therefore Jerusalem. He could combine with that visit a further report to the mother church of his second Missionary journey. He took Ephesus on his way, spending one Sabbath day there with much acceptance, and earnest request for a continuance of his ministry in that city. This, he said, he could not grant, for he was urgently bent, if the Lord spared him, on keeping the approaching Feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem (an argument that would weigh in his favour with his Jewish brethren). However, he left his friends Priscilla and Aquila to carry on his work in his place. That his visit to Jerusalem was a happy one may be inferred from the expression which describes it—"He saluted the church." Thence he went down, now for his last visit, to Antioch, a place so full of interesting associations to him. And, in the interval of his residence there, he laid his plans for a third Missionary journey.

The first months of this journey, during the summer season, he spent in the highlands of the Galatian territory, and Phrygia, to consolidate and strengthen his previous work among the Christian communities. And then, according to promise,

paid his visit, which proved to be one of three years, to Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and famous for its temple of Diana. On his first arrival he fell in with twelve men, professing believers, and, wishing to know more exactly their Christian standing, he put a leading question to them, the drift of which might be thus explained: "Have you been confirmed," and so "received the Holy Ghost?" After some conversation he found they had not received even Christian baptism. This then he ordered to be administered, and himself laid his hands on them for the supplementary ordinance; and his act was sealed by miraculous gifts poured out upon them.

After this interesting incident the Apostle proceeded as usual to the synagogue, where he had the singular advantage of a three months' unreserved exercise of his Mission, which was, to use his own significant words, "to preach the kingdom of God," and, what was more, to persuade his hearers to enter it. Many of them, however, hardened their hearts against what was spoken, as did their forefathers in the wilderness; not only so, but sought to prejudice others against it also. The Apostle forthwith quickly withdrew, and hired (as it would seem) an available room for himself and his faithful converts, where he continued his daily course of argument and persuasion for the long space of two years. And it became a popular centre of information in the principles of the Christian religion to the inhabitants of the whole province, whether Jews or Gentiles.

The efficacy of this ministry was supernaturally attested and enhanced by extraordinary influence proceeding direct from God Himself, and (considering that Ephesus was a city addicted to

magical arts) fraught with special and convincing potency. From the body of His chosen Apostle were carried handkerchiefs and linen girdles to the bodies of sick folk, and by contact the diseases left them, and demons were expelled from those who had been tormented by them. Some Jewish exorcists thought that they, too, could avail themselves of the Name of Christ, and so add to the strength of their charms. But their experiment proved a disastrous one to two out of the seven exorcists who appear to have been most prominent in trying it. Their would-be victim threw the whole weight of his body upon them, to their utter discomfiture. This scene, together with the recognition of Jesus and the acknowledgment of Paul by the Evil Spirit, proved to be a wonderful and wide publication of the apostolic Mission, as is most emphatically expressed: "Fear fell upon all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." Most marvellous was the result. Many that had become believers before came boldly forward to make their unreserved confession of their complicity hitherto with magical arts, and their sincerity was confirmed and followed by their utter and final renunciation of them, by burning the books which contained them, at a pecuniary loss of well-nigh £2000. It was a mighty triumph for Christianity.

Such also was the thankful conviction of the Apostle himself, so much so that he was already planning the extension of his Missionary labour to a city greater than Ephesus itself—no other than the capital of the empire of the world. His very words are given: "I must also see Rome." With his usual practical foresight he at once sent on two of his band of fellow-workers to Macedonia, to

prepare the churches there for the collection which he intended to make for the poor at Jerusalem.

Meanwhile he prolonged his stay at Ephesus. During the time he was there a most extraordinary scene took place in the city. Full of general and even amusing interest as the story is, it claims our notice here, chiefly as it illustrates the method and results of the Missionary career of St. Paul. It shows that in his preaching he had used no railing accusations, no direct attack on the cherished objects of popular idolatry. He had simply taught the truth, and sought to implant principles in the hearts of his hearers which would of themselves destroy all idol worship. And the result was so remarkable that it had all but destroyed the local trade connected with it. In the tumult and wild confusion that convulsed the whole city, the life of the Apostle was in imminent danger. With undaunted courage he would have met any number of the rioters face to face. His converts and the Asiarchs, who were friendly to him, prevented him. And it was well, for the enthusiasm of the people for their local and far-famed goddess was too significantly proved by a continuous loud yell of two hours. What it would have led to we cannot tell, but for a skilful and successful address of deprecation by the Recorder of the city. And thus, once more, the providence of his God rescued His intrepid servant in "perils from the Gentiles."

Quiet was now restored, and the Apostle began to put into execution his previously arranged plans, and, after giving some comforting advice to his converts at Ephesus, he started for Macedonia. On his way to that province he halted at Troas. The reason of this was,[1] that having, while in Ephesus,

[1] See 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

written a long letter to the Corinthian Church on subjects, one especially, which had caused him the most poignant sorrow, he waited at Troas for a while in the hope of receiving tidings there from Titus of the manner of reception of his letter. In grievous disappointment he proceeded to Macedonia. His Missionary labours in that province are compressed by the historian into the few words, that he went through those parts, though they extended, as is reasonably thought,[1] to the distant Illyricum. Thence he visited the other province called Greece or Achaia. While at Philippi his disappointment was relieved by the good tidings which Titus brought him, and he wrote a second letter expressing it to the church of Corinth. And here let me say that, in estimating his Missionary labours (which, to use his own words, involved "the care of all the churches") we must remember that the writing of several important letters to churches was going on at the same time. Thus during his stay of three months at Corinth he wrote two of his most important Epistles.[2] It is also to be remarked that his course of Missionary travels was changed more than once by repeated "perils by his own countrymen," who laid plans for seizing and killing him.

At Philippi, however, he had the comfort of spending "the days of unleavened bread" with his brethren, both Jews and Jewish converts. Thence he went for the second time to Troas, joining other disciples who had preceded them thither. His last Sunday there was marked by a fatal accident to a young man during the prolonged discourse of the Apostle, and his miraculous restoration to life on

[1] Cf. Rom. xv. 19.

[2] Those to the Romans, and the Galatians, probably.

the spot. This was followed by the celebration, perhaps interrupted, of the Eucharist, and by general intercourse before he took his departure. For some reason, not stated, he made his journey alone by land, but by arrangement he joined his party at a seaport about thirty miles distant, and by successive stages, briefly described, reached the port of Miletus.

To save time, and fulfil his intention of reaching Jerusalem before Pentecost, he sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus. The solemn and touching address which he made to them is recorded at length. I shrink from any paraphrase or exposition of it, which would only be a weakening and diluting of such varied utterances as welled forth fresh from the heart of the speaker. I *could* read the whole of them in full in the words themselves, and trust to their making their due impression on your hearts. But I think it may be more effectual to this end if, in consonance with the prescribed subject of the sermon on this Sunday, which is that of "Foreign Missions," I arrange a series of questions of special interest to Missionaries, Missionary candidates, and their friends and supporters, and call the great apostolic Missionary to answer them out of his own experience and in his own words. On this method, then, we proceed :—

With what words, for his future guidance, may a Missionary be suitably dismissed, when going to take charge of a congregation of converts from heathenism?

Take heed unto yourself, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseer, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.

In what spirit ought he to engage in it?

Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind.

How should his general course of life be described?

I have been with you all the time—at all seasons.

What two fundamental topics should embrace all his teaching?

Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

What two branches of work are to be kept in constant exercise?

Teaching publicly, and from house to house.

How may the object of his work be described—(1) positively? How—(2) negatively?

Preaching the kingdom, *i.e.* of God; to testify the Gospel of the grace of God: I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable; I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God; by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.

Name some things which he may, like others before him, find in his lot.

Tears and trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews.

What attitude of mind is the best preparation in prospect of difficult and discouraging work?

I go, bound in the Spirit, not knowing the things that shall befall me; save that the Holy Ghost testifieth unto me, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me.

What thoughts and assurance will best sustain him in such prospect?

I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course [with joy].

What attitude do assaults from without, and corruption from within, the Church, commend to him?

Grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye.

What should he be able to say at the last?

I testify unto you this day, I am pure from the blood of all men.

What, in temporal respects?

I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

What will serve to maintain, if necessary, his inde-

Ye yourselves know, that these hands ministered unto

pendent position as Missionary teacher?

What class of converts should he specially have in view herein?

What suitable final watchword may be given him?

What words of farewell to his flock?

my necessities, and to them that were with me.

I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak.

To remember the words of the Lord Jesus.

And now I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

You must imagine the after-scene at Miletus. The dear speaker had finished; and the tears of which he had spoken, and which we may be sure he shed at this time, found their natural and fitting response in the sore weeping, and the continued affectional kissing, on the part of his loving hearers, on this their last sorrowful farewell now to be taken. All devoutly kneeling, their beloved father in God poured out his soul in fervent prayer for them all; and then all accompanied him—it was some distance—to his ship. To him it was a "tearing himself away."

A rapid voyage took the party from one seaport to another, till they landed at Tyre. It was welcome to find that there was a Christian community, probably a small one, in that city. Whoever was the evangelist to bring it about, the Apostle would regard it as a fulfilment of an ancient prophecy.[1] But a week's stay was enough to establish a close bond of affection between the disciples and their teacher. The knowledge of the danger he would incur by going to Jerusalem was from the Spirit, the warning they gave him in consequence was from

[1] Isaiah xxiii. 17, 18.

themselves. The undaunted Apostle disregarded it; but their attachment to him was so strong, that the whole body of the disciples, wives and even children included, escorted him to the shore, and parted from him at the very place of embarkation after a solemn farewell on their knees in prayer. After spending one day at Ptolemais, the modern Acre, St. Paul proceeded by land to Cæsarea, finding a congenial home in the house of Philip, one of the seven deacons, who had a special gift for preaching. Here it was that the prophet Agabus once more appeared upon the scene, and startled the Christians by a prediction, uttered with the utmost solemnity and symbolical action, and in the plainest terms, that the Jews in Jerusalem would bind the Apostle and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. On hearing these words, St. Luke himself and the rest implored him not to go up to Jerusalem. It was all in vain. He deprecated their affectionate solicitations. They must not try this on him. And then he uttered the memorable words of self-dedication, "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus." There was nothing for it but to say, "The Lord wills it. His will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. The Lord's Prayer and the Lord's example settle it."

And so they packed up what things were necessary for their journey, straight for Jerusalem itself. Arrangements for their reception and stay there had been, as usual, made by some of the party, in the house of Mnason, a Cyprian, as Barnabas was, and probably an earlier Christian than he. This was well, for at the Feast of Pentecost Jerusalem was overcrowded with visitors. The Apostle re-

ceived at once a hearty welcome from the Christian brethren. And the next day the Missionary body had a more formal presentation to James, named thus by himself as being Bishop of Jerusalem. But all the presbyters were present with him. To such a sympathetic audience, having first given the kiss of peace, he recounted in full detail all the successes which God had granted to his ministry during his extensive travels. It was of course a voluntary report, his paramount object being to glorify God, Who had vouchsafed to his labours such blessing. And he had another pleasant communication to make—the delivery into their hands of the collection from Macedonia and others for the poor saints in Judæa. All expressed their devout thanksgiving to the Divine Head of the Church.

They also had on their part to offer their report of success to the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It is brief in the record, but most satisfactory, as showing what had been done in the mother church. "Tens of thousands among the Jews which have believed." And they had a special proposition and request to make of him at this very critical season, when the Jews, whether Christians or not, were gathered together at Jerusalem in such large numbers. "These converts," argue St. James and the elders, "are all zealous for the law, observing it still as a national institution. And they have been systematically indoctrinated, doubtless by the Judaizing party, that you have set your face against Jews continuing to circumcise their children, and against the other legal and traditional observances. What, now, is best to be done, to qualify or even deny this serious charge against you, especially when your arrival is noised abroad at such a time as this? We advise, then, that you take a personal

and prominent part in one of these very observances now going on. We have four Christians fulfilling a Nazarite vow. Do you observe the same form of ceremonial purification with them, and pay the whole expenses of the sacrifices prescribed them by the law. This open course will satisfy every one that you are no apostate from your traditional religion. As for converts from among the Gentiles, we all agree to the apostolic decree." St. Paul lost no time in complying to the letter with all that was asked of him, and that, we may be sure, with a clear conscience; he would "become a Jew, that he might gain Jews." The very next day he went into the Temple, and, besides taking the part required of him, saw every requirement of the ritual through to its completion—a remarkable proof of the true greatness of the Apostle's character, and carrying satisfactory conviction of it to the whole of the Jewish believers.

But a storm of wild violence was already arising from quite another quarter, from unbelieving Jews, come from Asia Minor, assembled doubtless for the Feast of Pentecost, but being on the look-out now, as at Ephesus they had been, for opportunities of violence against the hated Paul. The very sight of him in the Temple in the performance of the rites just mentioned was enough to kindle their fiercest rage. It was the old, unfounded charge, once levelled against Stephen, but accompanied by personal assault, and an appeal to the populace, couched in exaggerated terms of the most exciting kind. And yet this accusation rested on mere inference. They recognized Trophimus, a Gentile Ephesian, in the company of the Apostle, and wrought their excitement up to believe that St. Paul had taken him into the inner court of the

Temple, forbidden to all Gentiles. And this one unproved case, as often happens, was magnified into many more like it. The whole city, with passions thus inflamed, was in confusion. They dragged him out of the Temple court, to avoid profaning the sacred precincts, shutting the doors against his possible re-entry, or for other reasons, with bloodthirsty intentions. These, which anyhow meant beating him to death, were, by the good providence of God, prevented just in time.

A report of the general uproar had gone up to the chief officer in command of the Roman garrison in the fortress of Antonia, Claudius Lysias; and he took immediate measures, with an adequate supply of soldiers, for suppressing the tumult, by securing the man who was the occasion of it. The effect was at once to stay the hands of the would-be assassins. And the next step he took was to show the mob that there must not be a riot, but that justice would be done. He commanded that the accused man should be bound with chains to two soldiers. This done, he wisely, and with Roman respect for law, asked the assailants, who this man was, and what he had done, concluding of course that he had been convicted of some wrong act upon sure evidence. He got no satisfactory answer; how should he, with the deafening and discordant shouts on all sides? And so he ordered the prisoner to be brought into the quiet of the soldiers' barracks. But the pressure of the crowd following, with repeated execrations, was so great, that the two soldiers to whom he was bound were obliged to take him in their arms and carry him up the stairs to the castle. The Apostle took advantage of the moment to accost the chief captain. "May I," he asked, "say something to thee?"

Surprised to hear the prisoner address him in his own language, the chief captain rejoined, "Dost thou understand Greek? Surely thou art that Egyptian impostor who gave so much trouble lately, and was followed by a large murderous rabble?" "No," replied St. Paul, with straightforward simplicity, "I am one of the same race with the multitude outside—I am a Jew; give me leave, I pray thee, to speak to them."

Thus it came to pass, in the wonderful providence of God, that the cherished—even passionate—desire of the newly-converted Saul, to bear witness to his beloved Lord in Jerusalem, was at last fulfilled. We shall learn, God willing, on a future occasion, how he fulfilled it.

X

THE MISSION GIVEN TO ST. PAUL FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (No. 5.)

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, April 29, 1900.

"And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for, as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."—ACTS xxiii. 11.

IN several former years, on this Sunday after Easter, when "Foreign Missions" are the subject of the sermon in this cathedral, I have sought to take you with me along the course of the great Missionary pioneer, St. Paul, as, in conformity with the Holy Spirit's guidance, he evangelized and founded churches in the chief cities of the empire, "so that" (to quote his own words) "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ." One city only, and that the capital of the empire, remained as yet unvisited by him, which he "longed to see." But, in the providence of God, he was to see it, not as a free man, a free-born citizen of Rome, but as a prisoner in bonds. Yes, it was Paul, the intrepid and almost ubiquitous Missionary, who was to be fettered, in place after place, by the will of others, and, as a prisoner in bonds, to be taken at last to the imperial city of Rome.

The last eight chapters of the Acts of the Apostles relate the history of this eventful period of the Apostle's life. I do not purpose to review the several events of it as history, but ask you to fix your eyes and ears in thought upon the chief figure in that history, as being still "the *witness* of what he had seen and heard" before audiences diverse as the excited crowd of his countrymen of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim, the court at Cæsarea, the governor Felix, the court of the governor Festus, the king Agrippa, the crew and prisoners on board ship, the Jewish community at Rome. Truly did he say, "I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."

The Apostle, on former visits to Jerusalem, had spoken to sympathetic audiences of disciples. The supreme opportunity was now for the first time given him, for which he had longed and prayed at his conversion, to address his unbelieving countrymen. It was a bold thing to attempt, for at this time they were an infuriated mob, ready and eager to take his life. But his courage and tact were equal to the difficult occasion. Standing before them on the stairs of the tower Antonia, with a characteristic wave of the hand, he hushed the noisy and discordant cries of the vast multitude into silence, which became the deeper when he opened his mouth with a most respectful address to them, and that in their own accustomed Syro-Chaldaic tongue. After this conciliatory exordium, he told in straightforward language the story of his life. He had been really one of themselves, in his education by one of their chief teachers, in zeal for the law, in hatred to every one of the new Way. Nay, he could say he surpassed them all in fierce

pursuit to the very death of every one, man and woman, who bore allegiance to the hated name of Jesus of Nazareth.

He was, therefore, the very last person, with such antecedents as these, who should ever be expected to be found preaching the faith which hitherto he had passionately sought to destroy. But a marvellous experience, none of his own seeking, nay in direct opposition to his heart's intent, suddenly passed over him. This and its results he now proceeded to describe; and what is to our purpose to observe is, that he related the circumstances without comment upon them, without exaggeration, without (to use a mode of speech) "improving the occasion." The simple story was impressive enough without any of these artifices; and we may conclude was felt to be so by the hushed attention of the crowd of his countrymen below. But one single word which fell from the speaker was enough to put an immediate stop to their silence, and to change it into murderous execration. That word was "Gentiles." For they had been saturated from their childhood with reiterated teaching that the Gentile of every class was unclean in this world, and everlastingly cursed in the world to come. In this spirit of racial prejudice, they demanded the instant despatch of the speaker, even after he had only uttered the hated name, accompanying their demand with actions of uncontrolled passion. The chief captain, ignorant as he was of their native language, and therefore of what the speaker had said, thought there must have been some guilt in him to provoke all this commotion, and was preparing to put him to the torture of scourging in order to ascertain what it was. The manly and modest protest of his prisoner convinced him that

he must take other, or more legal, measures to secure justice in his decision.

With this intent he arranged another place and opportunity. What witness, now, would the accused bear before the assembled Sanhedrim? He began with a look almost of defiance around his audience, and with words of absolute self-justification. "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." It brought upon him instant and violent personal insult. His Divine Master had borne far greater provocation with absolute silence. The disciple did not thus restrain himself. His *language* was not too strong; but whether the *temper* in which he used it was to be justified has been a point of diverse opinion. Let us grant, however, that, as is certainly true, he did not attain to the perfection of his sinless Pattern; he immediately set himself straight, and went on forthwith to bear his witness to his belief in the cardinal doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, which was the ground of his own hope and the central truth of his teaching. Strange to say, the immediate result was "a free fight" between the two leading parties of the Jews present, bringing his life into imminent danger. Again the chief captain stood his firm friend, and a third time also, out of a new peril, a conspiracy most deeply laid to assassinate him. But in this, his critical danger, he had a far more powerful Friend, even the Same Who, when on His trial before Pontius Pilate, had Himself "witnessed the good confession." In the stillness of the night He "stood" by His faithful and sorely-tried servant—"stood," in the attitude of active succour, and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for, as thou hast borne witness of Me fully and earnestly (so the Greek

original) at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

And so we next find our Apostle at Cæsarea on his trial before the Roman governor, Felix. Being called on to make his defence, after he had proved, by clear statement of facts, the groundlessness of the charges laid against him, he boldly took his stand upon the consistency and integrity of his life, and avowed himself a believer in the resurrection of the dead, thus, with courteous discernment, putting himself in touch with his accusers. If on this account he were to plead guilty, it was simply that he had made it the constant subject of his teaching. The effect of his witness on the mind of the judge was plainly that no charge in law had been proved against him ; for, though he remanded him to prison, he allowed him exceptional indulgence there.

But now the history introduces us to another and a most unexpected scene. It was nothing less than a private, confidential interview between the prisoner and the judge, together with his wife, not sought by *him*, but originating entirely with *them;* and, to prepare ourselves for rightly understanding the record of what passed at it, it must be known that, on contemporary best authority, the judge himself was notorious for cruelty and licentiousness of life, and that his wife was, though of Jewish blood, an adulteress. Strange to think, they sent for the prisoner to hear what he had to say "concerning the faith in Christ," which he was in the habit of preaching. Their motive was clearly curiosity. Our Apostle, then, his court trial being still under suspense, was confronted with two persons, such as I have characterized, who wished to hear from his own mouth some account of what

was now spoken of everywhere. How could he discharge his testimony? Did he go through and expound the several articles of the faith of a Christian? I trow not. But, as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, he directed an unimpassioned straight appeal to his conscience on the very subjects which their vicious character needed—"righteousness, continence, and judgment to come." The solemn deliverance shook with terror the heart of the judge: but he steeled his conscience against its force, with the miserable plea that he would perhaps resume the subject another day. We have no reason to suppose he was serious in proposing it. He saw the Apostle afterwards, but only to show that, like a corrupt judge, he was open to a bribe from any of the prisoner's friends to set him free. Failing that, the wretched man, who had had his warning, and knowing well that the charges against the Apostle were proofless, left him in bonds, just to please the Jews—a vain measure, for he was soon recalled from his office for maladministration of it. Such was the man with whom St. Paul had been brought into close ministerial relations. Surely to have "set his face like a flint" in his presence, and to have delivered such a message from God, was an example of Missionary heroism almost more than his labours and perils in the Mission field.

Two years of his imprisonment passed. Festus, the new governor, was now president of the Roman court at Cæsarea. "The high priest and chief of the Jews" thought it a splendid opportunity to execute the plot, which had hitherto failed, of killing the hated Paul. Through arrangements which Festus kept in his own hands, it failed once again. The trial was resumed, not at Jerusalem,

but in the governor's court at Cæsarea. The old calumnious complaints were again brought up. The prisoner easily brushed them, one and all, away; and then, in response to a question put to him by the governor, he boldly claimed recognition of his rights and liberty as a Roman citizen. "I have been standing," he said, "all this while at the judgment seat of the emperor of Rome, which this court represents. There I claim to have my cause tried. If there lies any criminal action against me, I appeal from any supposed but unauthorized jurisdiction at Jerusalem to Cæsar's high court at Rome." The governor, startled at such bold words, consulted his official advisers, and pronounced in full court the grant of his appeal, which of course he could not have refused. The Apostle St. Paul (let me remind you) is the chief figure for us to-day to study; and we notice, as all Missionaries may notice for their guidance, that firm, though respectful, maintenance of civil rights is entirely compatible with any amount of labour and suffering for the cause of Christ and His Gospel.

We may now briefly remark on the actions and words of others in the scene before us, chiefly in order to prepare us for the next appearance of the Apostle in court. An opportunity soon occurred for Festus, evidently in perplexity how to deal with this novel trial, to confer privately with some distinguished guests, who had come to pay their respects to him. Of these it will be enough to say that Agrippa was the son of that Herod Agrippa who slew the Apostle James, then imprisoned Peter, and shortly afterwards died a miserable death; and that Bernice, his sister, was a wholly profligate and wicked woman. The report of the

case under trial by Festus to Agrippa is a curious, and in some respects an instructive, one. It exemplifies the view taken by a sensible and amiable man, an entirely outside view, of both sides; but to us, who are now watching the career of St. Paul, it shows what it was in his usual teaching that had laid hold of the general mind. The question, he said, was "of one Jesus, Who was dead, Whom Paul affirmed to be alive"; showing that with him the resurrection was the chief fact and doctrine in his preaching. The report interested Agrippa so much that he expressed a peculiar desire to hear personally a man so much talked about.

Accordingly, without delay, a very influential court was constituted. It is worth while to turn to the narrative. Besides Festus the governor, with his suite, and King Agrippa and Bernice, "with great pomp," were present the chief priests, the chief captains of the troops, and other principal men of the city.

The proceedings were opened by a statement from the governor of the exceptionally wide, and even rabid, interest in the prisoner, and of his own doubtfulness how to report on his case to the emperor, when, as hitherto appeared, nothing criminal had been proved against him. Agrippa was thus seated as the specially appointed judge for the present hearing, and in that capacity he granted the free use of speech to the accused man. On his part there was no need for "beckoning with the hand," as silence was assured; the "stretching forth the hand," like the action of an orator, betokened that he was about to deliver himself of a full apology, noble and dignified, every word of which reflected the transparent sincerity of the speaker. Let us dwell for a while

on the line of defence which he took, chiefly as illustrating the character of this great Missionary in such an audience as he addressed. In accordance with his usual habit, he began with some words of deserved compliment to the judge, in order to bespeak for himself a patient hearing. "The questions among the Jews" shall be the test by which his whole life, past and present, shall be tried. He was in no sort of fear as to the result. As to the past, the strictness and orthodoxy of his education and of his religious views were universally known. The very doctrine for which it was said he was now brought into court was one inherited from his Jewish teachers, and, in fact, was held by all the nation, even by those dispersed among the Gentiles. "*I* believe," he said, "as *they all* believe, in the resurrection of the dead, as an event to come. What moved my indignation was that the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, as a fact already past, was preached and held by so many; and it was a point of conscience with me, nay, my bounden duty, to exert myself in every possible way to extirpate that religion, and secure the death of every one that professed it, men and women alike. I shrank from no sort of cruelty, whether refined or savage, compelling them, as far as I could, to blaspheme that Name which was simply hateful to me. It was in truth a mania with me."

The speaker, we observe, with wonderful self-restraint, confined himself strictly to facts, without the least comment of any sort upon them, though we know well the thoughts of his heart on the retrospect. With like simplicity, he went on to describe the extraordinary circumstances of his conversion; but, having reached that turning-point

in his personal history, he repeated in the presence of the judge and of all others in court, whether friends or foes, the solemn charge laid upon him by the same Jesus, Who had taken his whole soul captive. These, he said, were the words: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." How could he disobey such a heavenly vision? How could he deviate from the order of the duty laid upon him? And therefore he began with his own countrymen, and then, and not till then, he went to the Gentiles. His teaching was summed up in the necessity of repentance and turning to God by a new life. Who would have thought that for teaching like this, the Jews would have sought to take his life, especially when it was all grounded upon the Old Testament, which he and they held in common?

Having begun calmly, the speaker had no doubt waxed warm and impressive as he approached the mention of the supreme purpose of his converted Missionary life; and so, in outspoken language, and doubtless in manner corresponding, he delivered the magnificent description of it, which must be quoted in his own nervous words: "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and

Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

This, to the mind of Festus, was the climax of absurdity; and so he broke in, and told the speaker, in loud tones, that, though he might be a learned man in those writings of which he had made mention, he was plainly "mad." That word was taken up in a reply remarkable for its respectfulness and calmness; and then, turning to the king, on the judgment-seat, he made his appeal, that he had said none other things than those which the prophets did say should come. He was sure Agrippa believed them too. "Well," said Agrippa, "with but little persuasion, thou wouldst fain make me a Christian." Quick and apt was the rejoinder, "I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds."

This ended the trial. The assembly broke up; and the chief persons discussed the whole case in private. All were agreed on the prisoner's innocence. Agrippa, especially, gave an unqualified decision that he might have been acquitted on the spot had he not appealed to the emperor, and so must be remanded to Rome. As to the private feelings of the brave and beloved Apostle, shall we not say that he was comforted by the echo of the words but lately said to him, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for, as thou hast borne witness of Me at Jerusalem, and now at Cæsarea, so must thou bear witness also at Rome"?

Of the voyage, the land journey, and the arrival at the imperial city, St. Luke, who was present

throughout, has left us a striking and vivid account. To-day, however, our sole purpose is to extract from it whatever may throw light upon the character of St. Paul as a chosen witness of Jesus Christ. He was still in bonds for the Gospel's sake, and to remain so for two years more. He was committed to the charge of a distinguished centurion, who took very kindly to him, but at first did not appreciate his knowledge of sea life, and all suffered severely afterwards in consequence of neglect of his warning. Afterwards he became the foremost figure in the whole body on board. The time and occasion were most critical. All had been given up for lost, ship and every one in it. The rations were seriously reduced. Then it was that St. Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and cheered them by the assurance that not a single life should be lost. His words were spoken by revelation, and bespoke a man who was not ashamed to avow his religion before all. "God, Whose I am, and Whom I serve. Sirs, I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

The prospect, however, became darker and darker; and in the imminent danger the selfish sailors were devising a plan for their own escape, leaving prisoners and others to perish with the ship. With characteristic vigilance, St. Paul gave the word of command, as if he was the only one on board to do it: "Sailors, remain where you are, else all will be lost." And so they did. And now all were witnesses of a truly impressive scene. After words of intense sympathy with all for the rigid abstinence they had forced upon themselves, he implored them to take some care of their *health*, for their *life* was absolutely assured; and then, with actions that must to St. Luke, who relates

them, have seemed very much like a celebration of the Eucharist, "he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it he began to eat." With the Apostle himself it was a "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," not for himself only, but for all the souls, in number two hundred and seventy-six, that God had given him. One more risk of loss of his own life, and those of his fellow-prisoners, through the selfishness this time of the military, was averted by the kindly thought of his friend, the good centurion. "And so," says the narrative, "they all escaped safe to land."

That land proved to be our modern Malta. The rest there, lasting three months, was, it would seem, employed by the Apostle not as a ministry of preaching, but as one of healing. It is refreshing to read of the wonderful kindness shown to this mysterious visitor, and others with him, by the natives of the island, called "barbarians," simply as not speaking the Greek tongue. Surely, when we consider their conscience of what was morally right and wrong, and their ministry of voluntary services to the "stranger" whom they had "taken in," we may trust that on the last day, when all nations shall be gathered before the Judge, a favourable verdict will be pronounced upon them.

The further journey to Rome was pleasantly relieved by a week's stay with brethren at the seaport Puteoli, and again by a deputation of Christians from Rome to meet him, an occasion to him of thanksgiving and encouragement. On arrival at Rome the centurion once again befriended him by securing a room by himself, still guarded, of course, by a soldier. It must have been a commodious room, and he allowed special liberty

of action, as after only three days he gathered round him the chief of the Jews, now again permitted to reside in Rome. To them he explained the circumstances with which we are already familiar, keeping to his ground, that it was "for the hope of Israel," which, of course, they shared with him, that he was a prisoner at all. They were curious to know more; and so, by appointment, he spent a whole day in a course of discussion of the Old Testament books, just as he had been wont to do in the synagogues, showing that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in them, and that He was the Founder of the new "kingdom of God." The effect was the same as it had always been, and we may add always will be, some believing and some not. Before they separated, the faithful Missionary made one more quotation from the Old Testament for their personal application, uttering this warning prediction with a further pronouncement, even for him, of unusual emphasis: "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." Well might the departing company hold serious conference among themselves, some, we trust, being led to become believers in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

What has just now been related was only one instance of the open *witness* borne by the Apostle St. Paul "of what he had seen and heard" to all that came to hear it at his mouth, for the space of two years. We can verify the facts by his own report of them. "The things" (he said) "which happened unto me have fallen out unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in the palace, and in all other places."

Thus had this great Missionary attained the

object of his desire to "bear witness" for his Divine Lord in the capital of the world. Thus did his beloved companion St. Luke record the same. But the world of our own day is far larger than it was to them. *We* know its full extent, and influence waits upon our knowledge. That knowledge and that influence, which, as a nation, we possess, entail upon us the duty of using them for the benefit and salvation of mankind. The Bicentenary year of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, now near at hand, emphasizes the duty. Nay, the Lord Jesus it is Who requires it of every member of His Church. See to it, my brethren, I pray you, that you be not wanting, any of you, to take your part in it when you will be called upon.

XI

ST. PAUL THE MISSIONARY SPEAKS FOR HIMSELF

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, April 21, 1901.

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."—1 COR. xi. 1.

IT is not uncommon, we know, that in issuing the biography of some distinguished person, the title-page announcing it should run in the form of "The Life and Letters" of such an one, and I think it will be found to be the experience of most readers that, however valuable the story of the *life* with its varied incidents may prove to them, they turn with special interest of a closer and more personal kind to the *letters* that accompany it. There is a peculiar fitness of memoirs by contemporaries, or those who were familiar with contemporaries, to make us acquainted with people in their own intimate character. It is, we suppose, this adaptation of memoirs, enabling us to know personalities—not what men did, but what they were—which gives them a charm so much greater than formal history. We desire to know formal history in order to trace the world-movements of races and kingdoms, but, for our delight and improvement, we must have, belonging to each great period, some diary or collection of letters composed on special occasions, arising,

without formality or the design of completeness, to teach us what sort of men these were in themselves, apart from the great historical events which force us to think of them less as men than as impersonal powers.[1]

Now this is especially true in the instance of St. Paul. The Acts of the Apostles, together with the Epistles which go under his name, may fitly be described as "The Life and Letters" of the great apostolic Missionary.

For several years past, on this Sunday, with its sweet distinctive title "The Sunday of the Good Shepherd," it has been my duty and privilege, as Canon of St. Augustine in this cathedral, to speak to you of the Mission given to St. Paul in the extension of the kingdom of God and of what he did in the fulfilment of it. We happily possess an inspired record of his life, and a wonderful life too. But even the intense interest with which we read his life must yield to that with which we read his letters. In these he unbosoms to his spiritual children, without reserve, his innermost feelings, motives, hopes, fears, desires, encouragements, and disappointments. It is indeed a wonderful revelation of his secret self; and it has been left on record, we may be sure, for the edification of the Church in all subsequent ages.

The Apostle bids us be followers of him, as he also was of Christ. True it is that we are not likely to be called to the Missionary life, but it cannot be otherwise than a profitable employment to

[1] The Rev. Phillips Brooks, at that time rector of Holy Trinity, Boston, U.S.A., published a book entitled *Letters of Travel*. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes said that "only after reading them did he know the man."—*Life and Letters of Phillips Brooks*, vol. ii. p. 338.

draw out, in some orderly arrangement, what he has told us of himself in the letters he wrote out of the fulness of his large heart, described once with true eloquence by St. Chrysostom, as "the heart of the world."

Let me, however, first of all, commend to you some leading thoughts which it will be well for you to carry in your minds during all that will be said.

Chiefest of these, remember that you have an intimate concern in Missionary work, for it was by the precious blood of His dear Son that Almighty God purchased to Himself an universal Church; and that by the mouth of that Son was given the command to make it really universal, by preaching the Gospel to every creature under heaven.

Then, have constantly in remembrance the wonderful conversion of the persecutor Saul and his special vocation to be the Missionary to the Gentiles; and, as you hear from his own testimony how he preached the faith which once he destroyed, do you glorify God in him.

Be careful to show forth your thankfulness for the same by following the holy doctrine which he taught.

Observe, too, in all that he says of himself personally in his Epistles, that he has really set before you the several marks of a true Missionary, and pray that these may be reproduced in all Missionaries, especially in those of your acquaintance, some possibly near and dear to you.

I propose, then, to lay down the characteristics which ought to concur in an ideal Missionary, and to exhibit under each one how they were exemplified in our Apostle, by the evidence of his own writings.

1 Suitable previous preparation, and clear Divine

call.—What were these in St. Paul's case? "If any other man," says he, "thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more; circumcised the eighth day; as touching the law, a Pharisee; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." All this, and more, that he tells us in his public speeches, was excellent intellectual preparation, which by-and-by was to be useful in his Missionary life; but there was another side to this, for in the retrospect he called himself "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious." Why? Because in his mistaken conscience he was as yet fighting against Him Whose Missionary he was afterwards to be. The real cause was by grace, "the grace of his Lord exceeding abundant." It had pleased God to "separate him from his mother's womb" for doing the work to which He had chosen him. In short, the preparation was providential, the vocation Divine, no other than the audible voice which came to him at mid-day from Jesus Christ Himself.

That supreme command from his newly-found Master left an indelible impression upon his whole being. The outward signs were complete blindness and entire abstinence from food and drink for the space of three days. Of course it was necessary for him, as for others, to be admitted into the Church by the sacrament of holy baptism; but though he had a few days' Christian intercourse with the brethren, and even preached Christ as the Son of God with power and success, he has told us in one of his letters the real conclusion of his preparation for the Missionary life. "The Gospel which I preached I neither received of man,

neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem, but I went into Arabia." It was no wonder if St. Paul, after a great shock to his whole moral nature, and with the new and awful responsibility of a Divine commission resting upon him, felt the need of solitude, self-searching, and secret illumination, and was Divinely directed to a locality, perhaps that of Mount Sinai, for such purpose, well calculated as it was for solemn contemplation and awe.

As was the experience of his Divine Master, so was this of His disciple, an extraordinary preparation for an extraordinary Mission. But in his case all the characteristics which are found in the true Missionary were marked in an extraordinary degree. Thus he was filled with

2. **Intense love for Jesus Christ.**—Intense, I say; for words seem to fail him when he gives utterance to it, and they are mingled with the humblest thoughts of himself. Thus, in his letter to the Corinthians: "Whether we be beside ourselves, fools for Christ's sake, it is to God; for the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them." "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." To the Galatians: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." To the Philippians: "My earnest expectation and my hope is that, with all boldness, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ,

and to die is gain." "What things (in my earlier life) were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." To his beloved son Timothy: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering." He loved to give himself the title of "a slave of Jesus Christ." Especially was he remarkable for

3. Devout thanksgiving for having been admitted into the Christian ministry.—This, we must note, was always accompanied with a sense of the essential need of faithfulness in it, and jealousy of any corruption of it. Thus, writing to Timothy, he says: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, Who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;" to the Thessalonians, "As we were approved of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts; for neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness, God is witness;" to the Corinthians, "I am the least of the Apostles, but by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." In one or other of his letters he gives

open expression to the motives which actuated him in his labours. He could do no otherwise. "Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." And that Gospel was no invention of his own. "I certify you, brethren," writing to the Galatians, "that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Armed with such credentials, he denounces in the severest terms any deviation from or deceitful handling of the message entrusted to his ministry. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." For ourselves, "seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

These motives and principles would have characterized the ministry of our Apostle, even had it been confined to his own countrymen; but, beyond this, that ever-to-be-remembered voice from heaven had filled his whole soul with

4. Wonder and joy at being called to the Missionary life.—The mere thought of it stirs him to the very depths; and when he comes to speak of it in any of his letters he breaks out into the most enthusiastic strains. Thus to the Ephesians: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery." And in like manner to the Romans: "The grace is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of

Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named," but, in words to the Corinthians, "having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you." Again: "As I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office;" "but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." In this spirit did this apostolic Missionary accept his vocation. He lived and laboured in it for nothing else; he delighted in reciting what God had done by him, and yet panted for more; only wondering that all men were not filled with his enthusiasm.

But now, we must take especial note, this enthusiasm was no mere passionate outburst of emotion, but was steadily under the regulation of two dominant conceptions of the Foreign Missionary work to which he had been supernaturally called. To use his own words, he was an "imitator of Christ." The Divine Missionary Whom it was his supreme object to imitate had, we might remember, begun His ministry by "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom," saying, "The kingdom of God is at hand," and in the same tenor had concluded it by "speaking to His disciples the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" during the great forty days after His Passion. Our Apostle, following in his beloved Master's steps, has left in his writings remarkable testimony to the importance he attached to this great and fundamental

principle of teaching, while he varied the figure he employed. Thus: "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism . . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . . from Whom the whole body joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." And so again: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." He goes on to denounce schism in the body, or schism from the body. There is no possibility of mistaking the Apostle's principles on this subject, as propounded in his letters. Hence we ought to reckon among the characteristics of an ideal Missionary

5. **A right understanding of the nature of the kingdom of God, in its establishment and extension.**—Into this kingdom St. Paul was labouring with all his might to bring men and women, of all nations and conditions, never leaving them to choose religious communities for themselves. For it was to the Church "that the Lord added daily such as were being saved."

But again, in the prosecution of his Missionary work, St. Paul had before him the example of his Divine Master, Who, though frequently addressing multitudes of people, who "were very attentive to hear Him," exercised His ministry to individuals, according to their different character and needs—*e.g.* His future disciples, the good centurion, the penitent harlot, the woman of Samaria, the publican

Zaccheus, the doubting Thomas. And so His faithful imitator dealt with separate cases, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, whereunto I also labour." Sundry of his letters exemplify this branch of ministerial work, and taking him for our pattern, we may lay down as an essential qualification of every Missionary, that he should possess

6. Readiness to treat individual souls in their ever-varying conditions.—Mere readiness, however, without fitness, is of very doubtful value in this department of Missionary service. It is necessary, therefore, that we should examine the correspondence of St. Paul with the several churches he had founded to exhibit his remarkable qualifications for the successful discharge of it. I will, therefore, enumerate some of the chief dispositions which constitute what I have called fitness, subjoining to each, severally, proofs in his own simple and unstudied words of his constant action under their influence.

7. Large-hearted sympathy.—To his beloved Philippians it was overflowing, and we may imagine what response it awoke in their hearts when they heard in church such words as these written expressly to them: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now . . . . because I have you in my heart—or (I may say) because ye have me in your hearts, for God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye

be like-minded, having the same love. Do ye joy and rejoice with me. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." How could Euodia and Syntyche resist the double appeal made to each of them by such a sympathising heart! How would not the whole body of the faithful be moved by the news told them of the sick and mercifully restored Epaphroditus, a dear and common bond of sympathy between them!

The same note of sympathy runs through the letters to the Thessalonians, as thus: "We, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire . . . for ye are our glory and joy."

These, however, were dear brethren with whom he had held personal intercourse; but a like sympathy was extended to those whom he had never yet seen in the flesh. Writing to the Roman Christians, he breaks out: "God is my witness, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, for I long to see you, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." Observe what a depth of self-sacrificing sympathy is revealed in his passionate adjuration, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." Why? "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." And then look at the long string of names in that distant place, as yet unvisited by him, with some note of sympathy attached to the mention of each: "my well-beloved," "the first-fruits unto

Christ," "the beloved Persis," "chosen in the Lord," "our helper in Christ," "who have for my life laid down their own necks." How would the heart of each one, as he or she heard their own names in public, leap up as being beloved by such a beloved one! His sympathy had won them for ever.

8. Tenderness and severity—each on proper occasions.—Some men are all tenderness, with very little power to inflict rebuke; some men are marked by severity in their intercourse, and know not how to soften down words or manner. It was the rare co-existence of these important qualities, and that in a remarkable degree, which distinguished and rendered so successful the missionary work of the Apostle St. Paul. Writing to the Corinthians, he said: "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" He was ready to fulfil either alternative. But the awful scandal of the incestuous man demanded the severest treatment, and forthwith he administered it to the guilty man, with stern rebuke to the whole Christian community. His words are charged with indignant force: "Such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles." "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned." "I verily have judged already . . . to deliver such an one unto Satan." "Your glorying is not good." "With such an one, I have written unto you, no, not to eat." "Put away from yourselves that wicked person."

Now turn to his second letter, written to them after a suitable but not long interval, and observe the wholly altered tone of his words. The terrible sentence of excommunication had been pronounced according to his injunction, and its object, that the spirit of the guilty man might be saved, had been

thoroughly attained in his being brought to godly sorrow. The glad Missionary pours out his whole soul in tenderest terms, chapter after chapter, of which only a small portion can now be given: "My joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears (who would have supposed it in uttering those stern denunciations and command?), that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. . . . Such a man ye ought rather to forgive, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you that ye would confirm your love towards him."

It will be convenient to class under one head certain qualities which ought to be found in every Missionary, and which were conspicuous, as is easy to exemplify, in the Apostle of the Gentiles.

9. Skill—good judgment—candour—humour.—In writing to a church, *i.e.* that in Rome, which he had never yet visited, and which consisted of Jews and Gentiles, to each of whom he had a message, his treatment, in composition of their differences, is marked by great *skill*, as may be shown in the first three chapters, and in the ninth unto the fifteenth chapter. His counsels of mutual forbearance have many of them passed into proverbs: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." The whole of what he says may profitably be read with this one maxim in view. His parting injunction to Jew and Gentile is noteworthy—"Salute one another with a holy kiss." The same conciliating advice is what he gave to the Corinthians, amongst whom the party spirit was so bitter as to call forth his grave remonstrance.

Before he has finished his letter he says: "Let all your things be done with charity." "Greet ye one another with a holy kiss." Observe, again, his *candour* in the full explanation he gave to the Corinthians of his change of plan of an early visit to them: "I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." His *good judgment* is to be seen, amongst other instances, in his keen reading of character and discrimination of advance or retrogression in the spiritual life of those to whom he writes. Take an instance of the first: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth." And then of the other: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. Who hath bewitched you?" His shrewdness and *candour* are strikingly exhibited in the very great pains he took when collections were made for the poor saints in Judæa. We notice how he played off, so to speak, the churches of Macedonia to the churches of Achaia, to incite the latter to greater liberality. And then how careful he was that all the money should be entrusted, not to himself, but to men known and generally approved. "Avoiding this," he says, "that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us; providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." In truth his attention to details of all kinds is worthy of observation. "Only they (the other Apostles) would that we should remember the poor; the

same which I also was forward to do." "We hear that there are some among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort. When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat." What he writes to Timothy and to Titus is full of details. And his vivid remembrance of single persons is well exemplified in his touching letter to Philemon. A remarkable proof of his *skill*, directed we know by the action of the Holy Spirit, is evident in the choice of important cities and commercial centres for the prosecution of his work in the wide Mission field. Nor was this man, upon whom came "the care of all the churches," devoid of *humour* and irony in their season. He could "speak as a fool." He could "speak after the manner of men." He could say to the Corinthians in their self-glorification, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." And again, referring to the fact that when on his Mission to Corinth he had supported himself by his own industry, he says: "What is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong."

The Apostle reckoned himself to be "debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." How, we naturally ask, how could he bear the incessant strain, the continuous calls from all sides, the anxieties, to which his correspondence bears witness? He himself tells us from time to time how and whence he renewed his strength and refreshed his own spiritual life. It was by

"Faith, hope, and love, all warmed by prayer."—"We having the same spirit of *faith*, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." "Looking for the blessed *hope*, and the appearing of the glory of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that *love* His appearing." But the whole tenor of his writings leave us in no doubt of the secret springs of every moment of his Missionary career, for he constantly mingles his own spiritual experience with his teaching. And how much store he set by *prayer* for his converts, by asking their prayers for him, and by mingling their prayers with his own, is plain from the prominence he gives it. Many of the churches are greeted by the assurance that he always makes mention of them in his prayers. "Night and day praying exceedingly." "Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers." "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel." "That I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

A few words more must suffice on the present occasion. "Paul" has now been "permitted to speak" for himself. Behold, then, a portrait of the most noble of all Christian Missionaries drawn by his own hand. Contemplate it well. Imagine its being a fresh discovery in the present century, and

that you see it now for the first time. What does it seem to say to you? I will again borrow his own words. "I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your worldly things?" "While we have time, let us do good unto all men." "Pray that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified." "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."[1]

[1] "If we allow the Epistles to bring home to us the significant traits of personal feeling and experience which they contain, we gain a view of the apostolic Church which brings encouragement in our own trials."—Bishop Westcott, *Lessons from Work*, p. 32.

XII

ON THE OPENING OF THE BICENTENARY OF S.P.G.

Preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, June 17, 1900.

"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; for the people had a mind to work." —NEHEMIAH iv. 6.

THE books of Ezra and Nehemiah contain a stirring story of church restoration, church reform, and church defence, during a critical period of national history. I will give you the chief particulars, as far as they bear upon the purpose I have in view this morning.

Jerusalem—its temple, city, walls—all lay in a state of utter ruin; and so they had lain for seventy years, for the sins of the Jews. But God did not forsake His people, whom He foreknew. Daniel, in captivity, had perhaps shown to Cyrus, the king of Persia, the inspired prophecies of their restoration. *He* accordingly issued his imperial decree, and a number of the Jews took advantage of it to return to their own land, with Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, at their head. Their first care, when they had encamped among the ruins, was to replace the altar of burnt-offering on its original base, in continuation of old times, so that the daily sacrifice might begin again, morning

and evening. In a year's time, the rubbish was sufficiently cleared away for the building of the temple to be begun, and the foundation stone was solemnly laid.

Strange to say, no sooner did the mixed population, which had been planted in the old realm of Israel by Esarhaddon, hear that the Jews were rebuilding the temple, than they offered their assistance; but Zerubbabel and Joshua, remembering that union with half heathens had been the bane of Israel, and knowing these Samaritans had inherited idolatrous practices, refused their help. Their jealousy and their malicious efforts had the mischievous effect of discouraging the Jews from the work of rebuilding the temple; and so they occupied themselves with building up their own houses, and cultivating their fields. In a few grand but stern words, addressed to them in this condition of mind, they were taught by the Prophet Haggai the great truth, that nothing could really prosper, unless God is first served. And then he added some words of encouragement, which were enlarged upon by the Prophet Zechariah. Again, therefore, they began with vigour upon the temple. Again the opposition came from some local governors of Syria and from others nearer at hand, who despised the day of small things, and sneeringly laughed to scorn the efforts of the "feeble Jews" who had begun to raise up the temple, in poverty, amongst the stones of the ruins. Once more, relief came to them by a command from King Darius, that the rebuilding of the temple should be assisted, and no one allowed to molest it. At last, twenty years after the laying of the foundation stone, the work was ready for dedication, and the great consecration and ensuing passover were duly celebrated.

An interval of more than fifty years passed away, of which there is no record. Zerubbabel and Joshua, Haggai and Zechariah, were dead, and the spirit of zeal which had animated that generation had given place to a spirit of slumber. The church building of fifty years before was now to be followed by a course of church reform. Ezra, the scribe, was to be the instrument of the searching reformation. He had the favour of the king of Persia, and received from him a fresh edict for the restoration of Jerusalem. He began his journey from Persia in a thoroughly religious spirit, but on his way, and after his arrival at Jerusalem, he found to his great grief the population in a very lax condition, even intermarrying with their heathen neighbours. He set himself first of all to sorrowful lamentation and confession before God, and then vigorously dealt with this and the other prevalent evils. The reform was effectual for the time, but on Ezra's having to leave Jerusalem, the Jews, priest and people alike, all relapsed, and had fallen to a very low ebb, when a fresh reformer was stirred up to repair the evil.

This was Nehemiah, one of the captive Jews, who had become the favourite household servant of the great king of Persia. There was brought to him a report of the miserable condition of Judæa; the temple indeed standing, but the whole city a heap of ruins, with the walls and gates broken down, and the country at large a prey to the murderous robbers all around. The heart of Nehemiah, a lover of his God, his church, and his country, was deeply stirred. He wept, he fasted, he prayed, he entreated leave of his sovereign to let him go and rebuild the city of his forefathers, and he obtained his request. But the old enemies of the restoration of the temple were now filled with enmity and

opposition to the restoration of the city walls. "When Sanballat, the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly, that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." So malicious was the watch they kept, that Nehemiah was forced to make his survey by night, and alone. It was a sad sight that met his eyes. But his hope and spirit did not give way. He called together the priests and elders, who administered the affairs of Jerusalem, and so spake to them, that he inspired them with a spirit to undertake, in separate companies, a portion of the walls and gates for their own share, the priests beginning with theirs at the east, and others taking up the work by north-west and south, till they met at the east again. The news of the endeavour to fortify Jerusalem was heard by the hostile chiefs around them with indignant mockery. They kept calling out, "What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." No wonder that words and treatment like this galled Nehemiah and the Jews, and that they prayed bitterly against such adversaries. But whilst Nehemiah prayed, he also worked at the great enterprise, and took all necessary precautions.

These malignant people had no authority to interfere with the work, but they were continually preparing ambuscades to fall upon the Jews, and prevent the work from being finished. Nehemiah, therefore, arranged a constant system of watches by day and by night. The inhabitants were

divided into distinct companies; half of them worked with weapons lying beside them; half watched, with their weapons ready; but as the space was large, and the companies were far apart, trumpet signals were arranged, which might call the whole number to any part that might be threatened, while Nehemiah himself and his attendants went from place to place, day and night, keeping all on the watch and on duty. Thus, in this heart-stirring scene, all were builders and all were defenders.

On Nehemiah himself, as deputy governor of the city, there fell besides a disagreeable duty of punishing some of the wealthier among the Jews, who had lent money to their poorer brethren, and then sold them to defray the debts. His restraint of them threw more into the party of the enemy outside, and continual plots were laid against him to destroy his influence, and even to endanger his life. Yet, through all these difficulties—the "troublous times," as Daniel had called them—the wall was finished in the course of fifty-two days, so far at least as to render the city safe, and the gates set up. About this time, too, Ezra arrived again, and these two holy men proceeded with double vigour in their great work of the restoration of Judah, materially and spiritually.

They took a very wise, and, as it happily proved, a very successful course. They chose the seventh month for a great religious gathering. The original command to Moses had run thus: "In the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read the Law before all Israel in their hearing." On this occasion, the people were so eager to listen, that they came before the

appointed day. All stood in reverence as Ezra opened the book of the Law, and uttered a blessing, and all bowed their heads as one man, crying, Amen. But when they heard law after law that they had never known nor kept, and when they heard the woes that they knew would fall on the transgressors, there were bitter voices of wailing and lamentation. They stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers, then uttered their creed, acknowledged the justice and mercy of God's past dealings with them, and proceeded solemnly to renew the covenant for themselves, every one (that is) having knowledge and understanding of the meaning of it.

All this was much for Ezra and Nehemiah to have accomplished; but as, in the rebuilding of the temple, Zerubbabel and Joshua had to contend with open foes, so had Ezra and Nehemiah now in the rebuilding of the walls to deal with secret traitors (one at least in high ecclesiastical position), who were acting with a double heart.

However, in spite of these and other difficulties, and after a delay of nearly twelve years, owing it seems to the absence of Nehemiah, the great enterprise was crowned by a public sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving at the dedication of the sacred walls, when the faithful priests and the choir of Levites united in praising God for their restoration. Round the walls marched the procession, to every station named by Nehemiah, and at the gates and towers the trumpets were blown, and the Psalms were sung—

"The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel."

The joy of the music was heard afar off; as the white-robed choirs led the Psalm, the whole people

joined in chorus, trusting in the mercy that endureth for ever. For assuredly the restored and purified Jerusalem of Ezra and Nehemiah was the type of the Jerusalem that is above, and of her eternal walls.

Such is the outline of the story of the restoration of the temple, and the walls of the holy city, after all of them had been in ruins. Several things in it, for those who are on the look-out for instruction which all inspired Scripture is given to convey, call for our observation. It was the zeal and brave perseverance of a very few persons, though indeed they occupied positions of influence, that inspired the like in the people at large, and brought about these wonderful results. Again, the works were carried on, from first to last, amid the opposition of pretended friends, secret traitors, and open enemies; we read, "They which builded on the wall, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded." Let us especially take note, that together with the material temple, and the material walls, there were always going on a course of prayer, and religious exercises, and moral reformation. The whole of the undertaking was more than once interrupted altogether by political intrigue and of course was delayed by the absence of Nehemiah for his duties in Persia. To meditate upon these facts in the story, and to apply them to church work in our own days, is both profitable and encouraging too. Especially is this history an object lesson of hope, patience, endurance, and perseverance, to every missionary in the prosecution of his difficult, hindered, slow, but holy and glorious, work.

There is one chapter in the narrative to which I should like this morning to draw your particular attention. If you look at the third chapter of the Book of Nehemiah, it seems at first sight to be simply a list of persons' names and of topographical details; but to those who are desirous to mark and learn, there soon stand out several facts of practical value. It was a laborious but an essential undertaking. The rebuilding of the whole circuit of the walls of the holy city, beginning from the east and returning to the east again, was committed to more than [1] thirty-seven distinct companies, on the principle that each took a limited consecutive portion of this work to execute. In this we may discern the consummate skill of the chief organizer, the governor Nehemiah himself. This whole work was begun, continued, and ended with prayer. "The God of Heaven," he said, "He will prosper us; we His servants will arise and build." And so the priests, the ministers of religion, began with their portion, the sheep-gate at the east, over against the temple, and sanctified their work with prayer and sacrifice. And "the people, too, had a mind to work." The splendid example and spirit of the governor and of the priests had filled them with like enthusiasm. There was but one single exception, and that is put on record to their shame. "The Tekoites repaired (their allotted portion); but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their lord (or foreman)." All the while the workers had to endure from their enemies round about "the scornful reproof of those that were at ease, and the contempt of the proud." But they persevered, and the wall was joined together, even to the half of the intended height.

[1] So Canon Rawlinson, *in loc.*

I said just now that these facts were of practical value. We may make them so, if we will, at this time. It is an accident that I am here to take a *morning* sermon to-day. But that this is the first Sunday of the bicentenary year of the S.P.G., and that I am the preacher, is not an accident. No; it is a call upon me from God, which I cannot mistake, to fulfil the duty of trying to enlist every one here present to take some definite part in making the missionary efforts of this year a great success. The occasion, I may say, is unique; the opportunity for the Church is splendid; now is the time for taking advantage of it. I will not, however, detain you with arguments—this is neither the time nor the place—but simply state facts. The walls of the city of God, which is "the church of the living God," in our colonies and foreign possessions, surely need building up; nay, in South Africa, through the wide devastation of the war, they need re-building altogether. It is a vast and expensive undertaking, for the S.P.G. aims at nothing less, according to the means entrusted to it as the handmaid of the Church, than the Christianizing of the British Empire. And the most effectual way of securing this grand result is that "the people should have a mind to work," each one joining a company in executing a certain portion of what has to be done.

I can thankfully say, that a band of zealous volunteers in the cathedral precincts, and in the several parishes of the city, have offered their services, to call upon you to explain the work that is needed, to engage your prayers for its success, and to obtain your liberal support towards the funds which it is proposed to raise this coming year. Let me entreat you to welcome and cheer them by

your hearty co-operation. Let it be enough even to remember those miserable nobles, stigmatized by Nehemiah as having refused to put their necks to the work. Rather let work, alms, and prayer go together throughout. Be not disheartened or tempted to slackness by objections and difficulties which are started by those who really care nothing for the welfare or expansion of the Church of Jesus Christ. If you have a mind—a God-given mind—to work, you will disregard them, and then the portion which belongs to Canterbury will be successfully done. To each worker will be fulfilled the heartening words of the prophet of old, "The Lord shall guide thee continually; and they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach. Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

"Your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father," will surely be owned and blest, and will prepare you for that marvellous consummation when "the great city, the holy Jerusalem, shall descend out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

THE END

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